The Complete PROSE *of*

T. S. Eliot

The Critical Edition

VOLUME 4

English Lion, 1930–1933

edited by

JASON HARDING &

RONALD SCHUCHARD

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The COMPLETE PROSE *of*
T. S. Eliot

RONALD SCHUCHARD, *General Editor*

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VOLUME 4: *English Lion, 1930–1933*

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ENGLISH LION, 1930-1933

Introduction

The period of T. S. Eliot's life between the ages of forty-one and forty-five, the years covered by this volume, was a time of great inner disturbance, including the permanent separation from his wife Vivien. His publications from 1930 to 1933 are marked by clear continuities with his earlier prose – most notably, the preoccupation with Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and seventeenth-century poetry – albeit addressed with significant shifts of emphasis and tone. These years also witness a steady widening of interests from literary and critical to religious, cultural, and political commentary, a natural development from his writings of the late 1920s. His output in this period is slightly less intensive than in the 1920s. Two books of prose criticism – *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, collecting his 1932-33 Charles Eliot Norton lectures, and *John Dryden: The Poet, The Dramatist, The Critic* (1932), collecting three radio broadcasts from the previous year – emerged from commissioned public addresses. (His 1933 Page-Barbour lectures at Virginia, *After Strange Gods*, were revised before publication in 1934.) Two pamphlets, *Thoughts after Lambeth* and *Charles Whibley* (both 1931), along with substantial essays on "Arnold and Pater" (1930), "Cyril Tourneur" (1930), "Thomas Heywood" (1931), and "John Ford" (1932), were among those that made up the canon-forming *Selected Essays* of 1932 (his remarkable 1931 preface to Pascal's *Pensées* was added to the third English edition in 1951). Eliot wrote quarterly editorial Commentaries for the *Criterion*, which from January 1931 were signed "T.S.E." and which doubled in length to deal with the political and economic crisis. He delivered a dozen BBC broadcasts and contributed miscellaneous occasional essays, prefaces, letters and reviews. During nine months in the United States, he gave over forty public talks and an undergraduate class on contemporary literature (his extensive lecture notes are published here for the first time). After the publication in 1930 of his poems *Ash-Wednesday* and *Marina*, he published in the following year two experimental parts from "Coriolan," a long poem that was never finished. The end of 1933 saw Eliot drafting sketches in the "Landscapes" sequence – the first tentative steps of his late poetic style – and composing verse choruses for a religious pageant play, *The Rock*.

ELIOT'S LIFE, 1930-1933

Eliot sailed from Southampton to Montreal on 17 September 1932 and then traveled to Boston to assume the Charles Eliot Norton Professorship of Poetry at Harvard. He was returning for the first time since he left the United States as a graduate student seventeen years earlier. His homecoming placed the spotlight on the identity of this naturalized British citizen and Anglican churchman, uncovering some tension in the sources of his cultural authority. The editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* had introduced a commissioned article, "Letter from a Distinguished Former St. Louisian," by remarking that Eliot "has so long been an expatriate that he is more often regarded as an English rather than an American author." Indeed, after his triumphant return to Harvard, Eliot was hailed in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* as an "English Lion." His arrival was timed to coincide with the first American edition of *Poems, 1909-1925* and the publication of *Selected Essays*, collecting the critical prose that he felt was of lasting significance. If this was a period of consolidation and public acclaim, it was also a time of profound personal upheaval. In February 1933, Eliot wrote from Harvard to instruct his London solicitors to draw up a Deed of Separation from Vivien Haigh-Wood, his wife since 1915. On his return to England in the summer of 1933, Virginia Woolf noted in her diary that Eliot spoke with asperity about the failure of his marriage but that in his mid-forties "he wants to live, to love."[1]

Some reviewers of *Selected Essays* found it difficult to reconcile the author of the later critical essays with the poet of *The Waste Land*. In an essay entitled "The Cleft Eliot," Princeton theologian and philosopher Paul Elmer More, pondering the dichotomy in Eliot's work between "the older poet and the newer critic," wondered if Eliot's public role as an Anglican moralist entailed a renunciation of the past.[2] Eliot felt that he had crossed a spiritual watershed. He confided to More: "Some people find themselves consequently in circumstances such that the whole of their mortal life *must* be a torment to them . . . Hell is, for such people, here and now" (*L5* 292-93). The two correspondents discussed spiritual and moral issues in depth, including the nature of hell, with Eliot expressing his shock that More did not appear to have a strong sense of the reality of sin. In a letter to More, he described his marriage as "a bad Dostoevski novel," gesturing toward the extreme psychological dilemmas dramatized by this novelist.[3] Once he had decided on separation from Vivien, Eliot wrote to Lady Ottoline Morrell: "Certainly this break in my life will be very significant for me, and will perhaps alter my life somewhat." His reflections on the continuities between younger and older John Donne should be kept in mind: "people shrink from acknowledging that they are exactly the same at fifty as they were at twenty-five." Anxieties vied with hopes as he embarked on an uncertain future.

Several of Eliot's best essays from this pivotal period of 1930-1933 perform a strenuous Lenten self-examination. His introduction to Christopher Isherwood's translation of Baudelaire's *Intimate Journals* (1930) invokes an antithesis with Dante, brooding on the vertiginous divide separating salvation from damnation. Eliot asserts: "recognition of the reality of Sin is a New Life." Another lacerating self-scrutiny is displayed in his introduction to the Everyman edition of Pascal's *Pensées* (1931), which was written partly in response to Aldous Huxley's crude psychopathological explanation of Pascal's visionary ecstasy as symptomatic of an invalid's sickness. Eliot also contemplates "the sequence which culminates in faith" and the extent to which poor health may facilitate a mystical revelation, but he describes Pascal as the "Christian writer most pertinent to our time" – a strange claim unless one realizes that the Jansenist's respect for Original Sin and a "passion for asceticism" is consonant with Eliot's deepest religious sensibilities. The dangers of sensuality, leading to the hell of the soul's alienation from God, permeate Eliot's reflections on sexual relations as merely "the natural 'life-giving,' cheery automatism of the modern world." Ascetic self-discipline could provide a stay against existential sorrow and suffering. In the essay on Pascal, suffering is considered a necessary prelude to, and constituent element in, the joy of faith. In the course of a forthright rejection of humanism without religion, Eliot opined in stiff syntax: "Only those have the right to talk of discipline who have looked into the Abyss." A year later he observed in a more homely idiom: "even the humblest Christian layman can and must live what, in the modern world, is comparatively an ascetic life."

Eliot felt that his contemporaries frequently misunderstood his Christian beliefs. He explained to Stephen Spender that his advocacy of the importance of "sanctity, chastity, humility, austerity" in a 1932 BBC broadcast talk examining "The Modern Dilemma" would have met less resistance "if people really knew what the words mean." Following his separation from Vivien, Eliot visited the Society of the Sacred Mission at Kelham in Nottinghamshire, an Anglican retreat where he lived with monastic frugality. In contradistinction to Huxley's reductive psychologizing, Eliot's description of the daily practice of faith is dependent on the accumulative logic characterized by Cardinal Newman's conjunction of "powerful and concurrent" reasons. It is a rationale tempered, for those who are not saints, by continual doubt. For Eliot, religious skepticism is not incompatible with dogmatism, or an allegiance to Christian orthodoxy, a belief that extends through his literary, social, and political criticism during the 1930s. Phrases such as the "demon of doubt," the "restless demon in us," or "tormented by the demon of thought" sharpen Eliot's indictments of heresy and sin, of evil and the diabolic, even "the influence of the devil on contemporary literature."

The destabilizing turmoil in Eliot's personal life surfaces obliquely in articles written hurriedly under the pressure of deadlines. They color the tone, at times the subject matter, of the prose collected in this volume. After the death of Eliot's mother in September 1929, his failing marriage deteriorated rapidly. Vivien was often chronically ill, and her behavior, under the influence of a cocktail of drugs, was erratic. She exhibited signs of mental instability, causing Eliot private anguish and social embarrassment. The Eliots were on the receiving end of cruel and malicious gossip from literary circles. Richard Aldington's *Stepping Heavenward* (1931), a libel on their marriage, was the most egregious of all, issuing from an erstwhile friend. Eliot felt trapped with a woman whom he could no longer respect morally and for whom he felt no physical attraction (in 1928 he had taken a vow of celibacy). It is not known when Eliot decided to leave Vivien, but she had an inkling of this possibility shortly before his departure for Harvard. A photograph of the couple, taken at the Woolfs' Monks House in Sussex in September 1932, shows an emaciated Vivien standing apart from Eliot and Virginia Woolf. Vivien would recall her distraught state on this day, recording in a 1934 diary that she had been "*very nearly insane* with the Cruel Pain of losing Tom."[4] It is not surprising that Eliot's least-balanced literary criticism dates from the time of his decision to initiate a permanent legal separation from his wife. An attack on Shelley as "humourless, pedantic, self-centred, and sometimes almost a blackguard" in a Norton lecture of February 1933 is exacerbated by this atheist's objections to Christian marriage vows and his espousal of free love. Similarly, the horror with which Eliot turns over a passage from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* – "The serpent in the grass was sex. . . . So there we split. I was cruel and left her" – is a factor in the violence of his judgments on D. H. Lawrence pronounced in America.

In spite of a hectic calendar of public engagements in the United States, Eliot's time at B-11 Eliot House in Harvard was lonely. In this newly built student residence, with a room overlooking the Charles River, he hosted courteous but reserved weekly tea parties. In an introductory note to the posthumous *Collected Poems of Harold Monro*, completed at Eliot House, he declared: “The compensations for being a poet are grossly exaggerated; and they dwindle as one becomes older, and the shadows lengthen, and the solitude becomes harder to endure.” Eliot’s remarks on his friend Monro’s melancholy during his terminal illness, “There is no way out. There never is,” was equally a reflection of the bleakness of his own prospects. Eliot concluded his Norton lectures in March 1933 by invoking the “sad ghost” of Coleridge, according to Eliot a “ruined man,” unhappily married and thwarted in love. F. Scott Fitzgerald, who met Eliot in Baltimore, thought the poet looked “very broken and sad and shrunk inside”: the relish with which a painfully shy Eliot took refuge in alcohol at social events did not pass unnoticed.[5] Although lionized by American professors and their students, Anglophile Eliot, with his gentlemanly English accent and manners, attracted hostility from those American quarters irritated by his apparent rejection of their homeland.

In “Religion without Humanism” (1930), a corollary to his views on humanism without religion in “The Humanism of Irving Babbitt” (1928), Eliot said that among his American acquaintances, “there is hardly one who had any connection with religion.” He was not eager to mix in avant-garde circles in New York and Chicago. In April 1933, he spent a week in New York at the New School of Social Research in the company of his friend Horace Kallen and other “free-thinking” Jewish intellectuals committed to cultural Judaism and secular humanism. He then traveled to Virginia in May 1933 to deliver his Page-Barbour lectures, prefaced by a warm reference to the avowedly reactionary movement of the Southern “neo-agrarians” (he had praised their manifesto collection *I’ll Take My Stand* in the *Criterion* in 1931). Eliot had been asked in advance to address the question of how to preserve Christian religious tradition against the forces of secularism in the new industrial South. He made, in the context of his ongoing discussions with Kallen and others about culture without religion, a remark, later regretted, that “reasons of race and religion combine to make any number of free-thinking Jews undesirable” (*ASG* 20). Eliot’s defense of “Catholic” traditions had also led him to characterize Unitarianism as “outside the Christian fold.” When lecturing at a Unitarian church in Boston in 1933, he cautioned against a desire to “trim your ideals down to fit the behaviour of the nicest people” and of a complacent self-conceit leading to "spiritual pride." Eliot was at his most relaxed among his New England relatives. He visited Emily Hale in California, with whom he had been in a loving relationship as a young man; the prospect of their meetings offered some respite at this testing moment of his life. It was not self-pity that occasioned Eliot to remark to the graduating class at Boston's Milton Academy in June 1933, that were he able to address the teenage Eliot, a student at Milton, he would tell him: "See what a mess you have made of things."

Eliot's daily routines of work as a publishing director at Faber & Faber were something of a palliative throughout these fraught years (he wrote of the importance of a "certain amount of routine"). Eliot's duties at Faber involved a steady diet of business lunches and teas with aspiring authors, bringing him into close contact with a new generation of writers and placing him at the center of literary London. A large amount of his critical labor in this period was expended on reading manuscripts and advising authors. Scrupulously attentive to young poets, he was responsible for overseeing the publication of Auden's first Faber poetry volume (1930) and Spender's (1933): his blurb for the latter described Auden as the "satirist" and Spender as the "lyric poet" of a "poetical renascence." Eliot's overtures to MacNeice and Empson in the early 1930s later bore Faber fruit. It is therefore noteworthy that Eliot's estimation of the Auden generation of poets in a 1933 report for Sir John Reith, Director-General of the BBC, was decidedly cool. Aside from his work with Faber authors, Eliot edited the *Criterion*, Faber's house journal, and he wrote regular book reports for the weekly publishing committee. These duties entailed useful, if unglamorous, reading that informed a number of vigorous contributions to public debate in these years. The successful launch of the Criterion Miscellany pamphlet series should not be overlooked, as it was the vehicle for Eliot's most deliberated excursion into social criticism in this period. Eliot used *Thoughts after Lambeth* (1931), an outspoken causerie engaging with the politics of the Church of England, to redouble his strictures on the secular rationalism of H. G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw and Bertrand Russell – all of whom commanded far larger audiences than Eliot did at this time. In fact, the 1930s were crucial years in establishing Eliot's stature as a public intellectual and as an eminent Anglican layman, in BBC broadcasts, *Criterion* editorials, and wide-ranging articles and reviews. The prose collected in this volume, written amid the clamor of national and international crises brought on by the Wall Street crash and by incendiary political extremism, represents the crucible of Eliot's mature social, political, and theological thought.

ELIZABETHAN AND JACOBEAN LITERATURE

Eliot ventured into the field of Early Modern drama with dissatisfaction at what he thought were the antiquated judgments of nineteenth-century criticism. He regretted the tendency of Charles Lamb and the Romantics to dwell on poetry at the expense of the dramatic situation, and he found A. C. Swinburne's criticism idiosyncratic to the point of extravagance. Still, his intensive preparatory reading in 1918 for a series of London University Extension lectures on Elizabethan literature would remain the foundation for bold critical revaluations that, by drawing attention to aspects that had escaped previous commentators, modified appreciation of the plays and did a great deal to revitalize critical discussion. Since 1919, Bruce Richmond had employed Eliot at the *Times Literary Supplement* as a lead reviewer of books on seventeenth-century drama, poetry, and prose. In these commissioned essays, Eliot exhibited a startling ability to formulate seemingly offhand yet arresting and provocative epitomes of major and minor dramatists of the period. These essays are marked by an alert responsiveness to well-chosen quotations and by inspired, if opportunistic, *aperçus*. By the late 1920s, however, Eliot's endeavor to be acknowledged as an expert on Early Modern literature had been largely abandoned. In 1930, he told readers of the *TLS* that his erudition was "only of a poetical practitioner, not of a scholar." For example, Eliot's critical exegesis of a passage in *The Revenger's Tragedy* was based on a textual error – "For the benefit of a bewildering minute" (instead of "For the benefit of a bewitching minute") – copied from his unscholarly Mermaid edition of *Webster and Tourneur*. Although Eliot's scholarship was not impeccable, he used these lengthy *TLS* essay-reviews to keep abreast of the latest editions, upholding his belief that the most incisive criticism "waits upon scholarship."

Eliot's essays on "Cyril Tourneur," "Thomas Heywood," and "John Ford" originally appeared anonymously as leading articles in the *TLS*. In the former, he reiterated his fascination with the "cynicism, the loathing, and disgust of humanity" paraded vividly in *The Revenger's Tragedy*, which, owing to the "fierce grotesquerie" of the play's characterization, he decided to ascribe (against the consensus of today's scholarship) to Tourneur rather than to Thomas Middleton. These essays worry over the "personality" of the dramatists, which are usually cryptic or hidden beneath Elizabethan stage conventions, although pointers may be discerned in the larger *pattern* of their dramatic oeuvres. Eliot's standard for these dramatists is the supreme achievement of the "continuous development" (proposed in the essays of G. Wilson Knight) of Shakespeare's drama, through the "progress" of his tragedies and late romances: each Shakespeare play "adds something or develops something not explicit in any previous play." Those who came after Shakespeare, "with their dissolution of rhythm nearly into prose, and their worn-out wardrobe of imagery," represent a degeneration of the flexibility of Jacobean dramatic blank verse, which he asserted runs to seed in the plays of Beaumont, Fletcher and Shirley. In three BBC radio talks on Dryden, Eliot argued that his Restoration plays signal a successful innovation in the conversational urbanity of the verse drama: the language of Dryden's *All for Love* is inferior to the rich metaphorical complexity of *Antony and Cleopatra*, a much greater "though not necessarily a much finer *play*." For Eliot, Shakespeare's genius can be seen in the nuances of his mature verse style, expressive of a deft handling of minute details. By contrast, Dryden perceived "that the possibilities of writing in the mode of Shakespeare were exhausted."

In the preparation of *Selected Essays*, Eliot devoted an entire section to his "Elizabethan Essays," an indication of where contemporaries saw an unrivalled achievement. Eliot's youthful exploration of Early Modern drama was founded on a fervent creative-critical obsession or "saturation" in its wild rhetoric and the macabre theatricality of horrific violence and savage erotic desires. By the 1930s, the intensity, if not the intelligence, of this encounter had altered in its emphasis. Eliot's Christian perspective concentrated on the chaos and disorder evident in the drama of this age, such that his former enthusiasms were redefined by a new attention – pioneered in Wilson Knight's interpretation of thematic imagery – to the redemptive rituals performed in Shakespeare's final plays. If Eliot's later essays on Elizabethan and Jacobean drama seldom stoke the fiery creative-critical furnace of his early forays, they can still be shrewd and thought provoking: for instance, in the comparison between the hatred of *The Revenger's Tragedy* and Swift's misanthropy, or when Eliot likens Frankford's plainspoken yet haunting expression of loss in *A Woman Killed with Kindness* to Lear's broken speech over the lifeless body of Cordelia.

In 1930, Eliot recast his eight 1926 Clark Lectures into a series of six radio broadcasts on seventeenth-century poetry. These broadcasts not only reveal significant revaluations in Eliot's estimations of the poets in question but also clarify several deep-seated preoccupations. Subsequent essays reinforced the reassessments articulated in these talks. The most notable revision is the scaling down of Eliot's admiration for the complex fusion of thought and feeling in the "metaphysical conceit." Richard Crashaw's reputation suffers from the "vulgarly opulent and decorated" nature of his elaborate conceits. George Herbert, who had been mentioned only in passing throughout the Clark Lectures, is celebrated for a "personal genius for simplification." In a contribution to a series called "Studies in Sanctity," Eliot reconsidered Herbert in the terms once reserved for Donne. He asserts that Herbert is "an anatomist of feeling and a trained theologian" whose poetry reveals the "slow, sometimes almost despairing and always agonizing toil of the proud and passionate man of the world towards spiritual life." The religious mysticism glimpsed in the poetry of Herbert, Vaughan and Traherne was now a more suitable subject for serious reflection than the "metaphysical wit" of the school of Donne, including Andrew Marvell and the Cavalier poets. In a pairing indicative of a diminution of esteem for Donne, Dryden is said to have achieved "as astounding a vivification of the language as anything of Donne." Comments of this sort disconcerted Eliot's younger admirers, especially those who sought to write an ingenious type of modern metaphysical poetry. William Empson was annoyed when Eliot, echoing John Sparrow, declared in a tercentenary collection of essays, *A Garland for John Donne* (1931), that Donne was "no sceptic" but a "sincere churchman." This essay repudiates Eliot's celebrated statement of the metaphysical poet's "undissociated" sensibility, by observing: "In Donne, there is a manifest fissure between thought and sensibility."

By 1931, Eliot no longer wished to prepare his Clark Lectures for publication. Recent research and criticism on Donne and the pan-European theological and intellectual contexts of the "metaphysical poets" by Mario Praz, Pierre Legouis, and others, building on the work of Herbert Grierson, called into question Eliot's historical generalizations. He admitted that the "dissociation of sensibility" thesis was so sweeping a claim that historical scholarship alone could not substantiate it. Although academic disciples such as George Williamson and F. R. Leavis labored earnestly to press home Eliot's evaluations, the burgeoning study of metaphysical poetry throughout the 1930s illustrates the fertile ways in which literary critics and scholars responded to Eliot's remarks. His essays encouraged them to refine and extend scholarship in the field, which in turn led him to readjust previous statements. Eliot had an extraordinary impact on twentieth-century scholarship of seventeenth-century poetry, and it requires an act of recovery to demonstrate that this influence on contemporaries was exerted through essays, lectures, broadcasts, and reviews that have not been republished, but which significantly qualified the resonant opinions collected in *Homage to John Dryden* (1924) and in *Selected Essays*. Eliot's radio broadcasts on seventeenth-century literature have been consistently underestimated, partly because some of the most perceptive comments (restored in this volume) were excised from publication in the *Listener*. Contemporaries hung on his every word on the poetry of the seventeenth century. Eliot's essays and BBC broadcast talks formed a major point of reference, sometimes by provoking dissent, as they did in William Empson's essays on Early Modern literature, which aimed trenchant swipes at "the iron rule of the T. S. Eliot men."[6]

SOCIAL CRITICISM AND POLITICAL COMMENTARY

During the 1930s, Eliot aspired to help shape British public debate. In August 1929, he told Paul Elmer More that he was anticipating the emergence of "a new type of intellectual, combining the intellectual and the devotional" (*L4* 567). Eliot's appearances as a BBC broadcaster in the early 1930s marked the realization of this ambition. He was commissioned to take part in a long-running BBC series on "The Changing World." In his four radio talks, Eliot spoke as an advocate of Christian values and as a polemicist attacking what he took to be the corrosive claims advanced by Communism, psychology, and modern science. He explained to John Middleton Murry that since these talks were aimed at a popular audience, his rhetorical tone was "elementary in character" and "hortatory." The opening talk employed a familiar argumentative strategy of his, articulating an equable *via media* between mutually exclusive viewpoints: the views of a right-wing cultural historian, Christopher Dawson, and a left-wing philosopher of personal relations, John Macmurray. Eliot treated both of these prominent, if now neglected, public intellectuals with respect. These talks expressed only a grudging respect for the "Russian religion" of Communism (a view advanced by John Maynard Keynes[7]) whose strong convictions made it a rival to Christianity: "it is only with a genuine supernatural sanction that we can oppose [Communism]." Eliot underscores a desire for dogmatic faith, while downplaying class antagonism and the need for social justice, as the reason for the growing appeal of Communism among the left-wing intelligentsia, including valued young contributors to the *Criterion* (notably, A. L. Morton, Michael Roberts, A. L. Rowse, and Spender).

Interrogating the current vogue for psychoanalysis, Eliot argued that Freud was no substitute for the wisdom enshrined in the Christian Church, since he merely restated "old truths in modern jargon." Furthermore, in spite of the "destructive influence of scientific enquiry upon religious belief," especially the controversy promoted by champions of Darwinism, the choice between religion and science was, in Eliot's eyes, a "phantom dilemma": "it is not science that has destroyed religion but our preference for unbelief."

In *Thoughts after Lambeth*, Eliot predicted the failure of attempts to establish a non-Christian civilization, acknowledging "an odd and rather exhilarating feeling of isolation" in the process. In many ways, this pamphlet offers striking testimony to Eliot's position within the Church of England. It was a response to the report of the 1930 Lambeth Conference, in which 307 bishops of the Anglican Communion presented seventy-five resolutions on "The Faith and Witness of the Church in this Generation." Eliot said that he disliked the word "generation": he made a point of denying that *The Waste Land* had expressed the "disillusionment" of the postwar generation, and he was scornful of the Lambeth report's remarks on the topic of "Youth and its Vocation," observing that young Christians did not want a faith stripped of arduous self-discipline. Nor was Eliot persuaded by the claims advanced by liberal Anglican theologians regarding the compatibility of religion with modern philosophical thought, declaring that the ideas expressed in A. N. Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*, or by the popular science writer Sir Arthur Eddington, "cannot confirm anyone in the faith." On the issue of sex and marriage, where the divisive Resolution 15 on the use of birth control had provoked acrimonious coverage in the British press and a papal encyclical (*Casti Connubii*, 1930), Eliot advocated a moderate position. He suggested that couples wishing to use contraceptives should first seek spiritual advice. Eliot was more animated by the steps taken toward Christian reunion. His adherence to orthodox teaching on subtle points of Church doctrine – above all, on apostolic succession and the administering of the sacraments – prompted satirical caricatures of Evangelicals and Anglican Modernists. Differences from the ecumenical movement reveal the conservative cast of Eliot's Anglo-Catholicism, not to be confused with Roman Catholicism ("in England a sect"). Anglo-Catholics were a select group within the Church of England during the interwar period: on sensitive issues they could be bitterly critical of ecclesiastical hierarchy.

Eliot's political theory was no less intricate or embattled than his theological beliefs. In an expanded signed *Criterion* editorial, expatriate Eliot noted with irony: "no foreigner can really understand British politics." His declaration in the preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928) that he was a "royalist in politics" who was opposed to "temperate conservatism" puzzled many British observers, who could not understand that this conception of royalism was modelled on Charles Maurras's Action Française and the "integral nationalism" of extreme right-wing French patriotism allied with Catholicism as a state religion. By 1930, Eliot was willing to admit "errors" and "dangers" (*L5* 134) in Maurras's position and its inapplicability to distinctive British political traditions. He told Charles Smyth on 8 June 1932 that royalism had "always been unformulated in my own mind," explaining why a book on *The Outline of Royalism*, promised in *For Lancelot Andrewes*, remained unwritten. Eliot's reflections on the political interrelation of church and state were in solidarity with the militant Toryism of his *Criterion* backers Charles Whibley and F. S. Oliver. His memorial lecture on Whibley, praising "*plainspeaking*" as a mode for the man of letters addressing public affairs, cited several distinguished Tories: Clarendon, Bolingbroke, and Disraeli. However, in his *Criterion* editorials, Eliot conceived of twentieth-century Toryism not "as something to be revived" but as "something to be invented." The church exists in tension and sometimes in conflict with an increasingly secular modern state. Eliot's political philosophy was founded on Christian principles, not the expediency of political "trimmers" shifting their sails to the prevailing winds: "Unless Toryism maintains a definite and uncompromising theory of Church and State, Toryism is merely a fasces of expedients." Eliot did not advocate a totalitarian dismantling of democracy: in a letter to Bonamy Dobrée, he remarked, "I think we are in agreement that 'Order' and 'Authority' are more dangerous catchwords now . . . I am terrified of the modern contempt of 'democracy' . . . I am as scared of Order as of Disorder" (*L5* 375). For this reason, Eliot's emphasis upon order and authority never turned into authoritarianism; yet, it entailed an uncompromising skepticism directed at the realm of practical politics. George Saintsbury's comment on Toryism "being conditioned, first by that very strong bent towards a sort of transcendental skepticism which many great Tories have shown," captures something of Eliot's own attitude toward the spiritual imperfections of worldly political interventions. Critics have detected elements of willful obscurantism in Eliot's political commentaries from these years and a lack of political realism.[8]

The scale of rising mass unemployment in the early 1930s demanded radical (some believed revolutionary) political solutions. In March 1931, Eliot informed A. L. Rowse, a *Criterion* essayist on Communism and the author of *Politics and the Younger Generation*: "I believe matters to be in a much worse way than most people think" (*L5* 507). Eliot decried the materialistic basis of British politics and expressed cynicism toward the three-party system. His *Criterion* editorials were critical of Ramsay MacDonald's Labour and his later National coalition governments, incorporating members of the "defunct" Conservative Party. He also denigrated New Liberal ideologues calling for the redistribution of wealth, through progressive taxation, into social welfare programs. Eliot delivered some of his most severe comments on the optimistic liberal ideas of liberty and progress. Yet, political extremism, inflamed by the current economic problems, did not lead him to embrace fascism. Eliot's dissatisfaction with Oswald Mosley's radical proposals, expressed in his April 1931 *Criterion* editorial, later hardened into a marked distaste for the British Union of Fascists. Eliot's sympathy for C. H. Douglas's Social Credit monetary reforms (he met Douglas in November 1931) was hampered by his lack of understanding of technical economics – "more incomprehensible than mathematics" he lamented – and, unlike that of Ezra Pound, did not go beyond lukewarm public support. Eliot repeatedly argued that economic questions should not be left to the expertise of narrow specialists but, framed correctly, required an ethical scrutiny of broad and general relevance: "We need another Ruskin" he exclaimed.

In the last analysis, Eliot's discussion of parliamentary politics in his *Criterion* Commentaries led to pious professions of resignation that bordered on despair. Perhaps the tone of too many editorials sacrifices the fine balance of an urbane irony to sound sardonic or intolerant. It was not likely that high-minded religious principles could provide solutions to the *realpolitik* of the financial and foreign crises confronting British politicians during an economic recession and the rise of totalitarianism on Continental Europe. In April 1931, Eliot published Thomas Mann's "An Appeal to Reason" in the *Criterion*, a warning about Hitler's gains in the German elections. The following year, Eliot praised in a *Criterion* editorial Ernst Robert Curtius's dissection of Nazi ideology. After Hitler came to power, Horace Kallen informed Eliot of the persecution of German intellectuals in the wake of an attack on civil liberties. Although Eliot was troubled by any fracturing of a common culture of Western Europe – the *Criterion*'s collaboration on an annual fiction prize with four European periodicals was discontinued in 1931 – his editorials in these years betray a poignant inability to estimate contemporary political forces at their true strength. Eliot's association with the Christendom Group of Christian sociologists led by Maurice Reckitt, whom he first met at the 1933 Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology, provided the forum for a more painstaking engagement with social problems in the 1930s, involving a critique of the failings of laissez-faire capitalism and industrialism. Eliot's approach was guided by his fundamental belief "that all our problems turn out ultimately to be a religious problem." In his address to the 1933 Anglo-Catholic summer school, he stated that Christians "cannot simply accept or reject the solutions offered by specialized theorists in the world."

AMERICAN LECTURES

The achievement of Eliot's American lectures from November 1932 to June 1933 has not been fully contextualized and assessed. Aside from the eight Norton lectures at Harvard, published as *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, and the three Page-Barbour lectures at Virginia published as *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy* in 1934 (collected in volume 5 of *The Complete Prose*), Eliot was a prolific lecturer in America. His three Turnbull lectures delivered at Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, on "The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry," a distillation of the Clark Lectures, were posthumously published in 1993. Several other lectures appeared in obscure or small-circulation American periodicals, but the majority, hastily composed and usually delivered from notes, were never intended for publication. The texts of five unpublished American lectures, all of them destroyed by Eliot, have been reconstructed by the editors from a range of contemporary eyewitness accounts. Their greatest value lies in supplementing and enriching Eliot's well-known general statements on literary, cultural, and religious matters, and in providing revealing glimpses into his thoughts about particular authors. Eliot's extensive lecture notes for his Harvard undergraduate class English 26 "Contemporary English Literature (1890 to the Present Time)" constitute a fascinating document offering an unmatched insight into Eliot's opinions of contemporary authors. Moreover, these lecture notes, on which he drew in the composition of *After Strange Gods*, situate the judgments of that book within a more temperate and predominantly literary understanding of tradition.

Eliot's Charles Eliot Norton lectures represent the most sustained critical contribution from his time in America. Eliot told several correspondents that the topic, "Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England," was selected because he had been unable to prepare the lectures in advance, in London, and it offered "a minimum of new reading and preparation." In recent years, Eliot had published considered, lengthy articles on Dryden, Johnson, and Arnold. And yet, the Norton lecture series constitutes his principal statement on Romantic legacies and on the state of contemporary criticism. The question of the social use of poetry outside of the theater – "what is poetry for?" – was a challenging one for Anglican Eliot, who was in retreat from nineteenth-century aestheticism and symbolist pure poetry. "'Pure' artistic appreciation is to my thinking only an ideal," he observed. Although Eliot explained to an American reporter, with his tongue in cheek, that he wrote criticism because it paid better than poetry, the relation of criticism *to* poetry, with a particular focus on major poet-critics – Dryden, Johnson, Arnold – was chosen for the Norton lectures because it was a subject on which a personal approach could yield new and significant angles on his own poetry workshop.

Eliot's enhanced authority as Norton lecturer permitted him the glimmer of self-reflection on the range and penetration of his literary criticism: "From time to time, every hundred years or so, it is desirable that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature, and set the poets and the poems in a new order." The function of criticism, then, as conceived by Eliot, involves the reorientation of tradition: not a deconstructive criticism but a creative reconstruction. It involves the development of a mature taste: "when we cease to identify ourselves with the poet we happen to be reading; when our critical faculties remain awake; when we are aware of what one poet can be expected to give and what he cannot." The rehabilitation of *taste* (etymologically derived from the Old French for to feel or touch), quite distinct from fashion, leads to a proper *appreciation* of poetry, in which the "most severe test is of its ability to select a good *new* poem, to respond properly to a new situation." The task of the great critic of poetry (for all the idiosyncrasies of Dryden, Johnson, Coleridge, Arnold, or Eliot) is to provide vital living standards by which "the really new" work of literature may be enjoyed.

The first four lectures delivered in late 1932 are focused on the "intimacy of the creative and the critical mind." Eliot argues that Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* has been overrated on the grounds that it contributed little to the extraordinary development of drama during Elizabeth's reign. This lecture, ostensibly devoted to the circle of the Countess of Pembroke, is instead preoccupied with exploring the superiority of Shakespeare's intuitive critical genius, figured in the "perfection of pattern" of his oeuvre. Dryden is praised for finding a balance between the poet and critic, and Johnson for resisting the prescriptions of eighteenth-century taste (exemplified by Addison's *Spectator* essays). If Augustan poetry was an age of "a good many second-rate poets" (4.168-69) writing under the shadow of Dryden, Pope, and Milton, Johnson's estimations of this poetry in his *Lives of the Poets* present a principled and durable testimony to the best taste of his age. Eliot's lecture on "Wordsworth and Coleridge," conversant with the latest critical studies, offers an ambivalent engagement with the strengths and limitations of these formidable predecessors. According to Eliot, Coleridge, whose *Biographia Literaria* is the fountainhead of modern critical theory, was the greatest English literary critic. He erroneously rewrites Coleridge on the imagination as "the power of reducing multitude into variety of effect" (Coleridge wrote "unity of effect"), indicative of a powerful resistance *and* attraction toward a central concept in romantic theory. After quoting cherished lines from "Dejection: An Ode," recalled as "one of the saddest of confessions that I have ever read," Eliot contends that Coleridge might have been a great poet "had he not been interested in so many things, crossed by such diverse passions." In a similar vein, the afflatus of Wordsworth's claims for the poet as a prophet in the 1802 preface to *Lyrical Ballads* leaves Eliot unmoved, but not the "handful of poems or a number of isolated lines expressive of deeper emotion," which clearly moved him deeply. The acute sensitivity of his comments on the concern with poverty in Wordsworth's poetic encounter with the leech gatherer in "Resolution and Independence" illuminates a flash of genuine intimacy between these poets.

Eliot's next lecture after the Christmas recess is less rewarding. Exhaustion and ill health, following a whirlwind lecture tour of the United States, conspired with the circumstances of drawing up of a Deed of Separation from Vivien, to produce a hurried critical performance on "Shelley and Keats." Eliot's remarks on Shelley are characterized by antipathy toward his ideas – political and aesthetic – and he admits a failure to enjoy Shelley's poetry (an exception is made of the late unfinished work *The Triumph of Life*). He misquotes with reverse alchemy *Epipsychidion*'s "True Love in this differs from gold and clay" as "True love in this differs from dross and clay." Dross appears to be a Freudian slip betraying what Eliot thought of Shelley's view of "True Love" in *Epipsychidion*, in which an advocacy of "free love" emerged out of the domestic difficulties of Shelley's marriage with Mary. Keats receives far more sympathetic consideration, but only his letters – "the most important ever written by any English poet" (the subject of another lecture delivered at Yale) – are quoted and, curiously, given that Eliot numbers Keats among the great English poets, not a single line of poetry.

Eliot's lecture on "Matthew Arnold" is richer in detail and situates its severe judgments on Arnold as a poet ("an academic poetry") and as thinker ("an undergraduate"), amplified by quotation and analysis, wittily rather than insolently. Arnold is chastised for the lack of an "auditory imagination": "the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word." Although the verdict is harsh, this lecture does not merely rehearse the critique of Arnold's aestheticism advanced in "Arnold and Pater," but it does repeat the complaint that Arnold is responsible for a modern confusion of literature with religion. Arnold's writings on culture and theology are more sophisticated than Eliot's tendentious summary allows. His antagonistic attitude deflects attention from how much his prose criticism owes to Arnold.

The closing lectures are premeditated incursions into literary politics. Eliot told Paul Elmer More that he used the Norton lectures to publicly dissociate himself from two leading contemporary critics, I. A. Richards and Herbert Read, who were mistakenly viewed as working in a *Criterion* school of criticism. Eliot seeks to refute Read's elucidation of a main English poetic tradition determined by a psychological disjunction between the spontaneity of *personality* and fixity of *character*. Read's stress upon a romantic "true voice of feeling" marks a clear divergence from Eliot. The Norton lectures reignite a long-running debate with Richards on the relation of poetry to belief, taking up the positions Eliot defined in "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930), addressing whether the reader must share the poet's beliefs in order to fully appreciate the poetry. The Norton lectures highlight fundamental differences on doctrinal grounds. Eliot calls Richards's aesthetics his "theological ideas," dismissing one-by-one the set of contemplative exercises adumbrated in *Practical Criticism* (1929) as a necessary preparation for literary judgment. Richards and Read were upset by what they felt were Eliot's misrepresentations of their critical theories: Richards responded in *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934) and Read in *In Defence of Shelley* (1936) to the gauntlets thrown down at Harvard. "The Modern Mind" lecture quotes Jacques Maritain's essay on the "Frontiers of Poetry" in *Art and Scholasticism* (1927), defending the primacy of spiritual values, to buttress a strict neo-Thomist separation between poetry and religion. In his concluding Norton lecture, Eliot struggles to erect a Christian aesthetics that can entertain avant-garde experimentation while laying down rules on what is perceived to be spiritually harmful, or reckless, in the psychological explorations of modernist works of art. It is a short step from the "Conclusion" of the Norton lectures to *After Strange Gods*. In the light of this, it is surprising that Eliot gives a sympathetic hearing to Henri Brémond's analogy between mystical experience and poetic creation, anticipating a crucial theme of *Four Quartets*.

The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism is a foundational text in twentieth-century literary theory. This is not so much by virtue of its historical scholarship (the lectures were composed too quickly for accuracy or depth of reading), but due to the bracing and stimulating expression of the critical opinions of a poet unapologetic about upsetting an established scale of values. In this regard, the literary-historical survey contained in the Norton lectures retains an immediacy and relevance denied to George Saintsbury's three-volume *History of Criticism* (1900-04), a dead monument to Victorian historical criticism. In his final Turnbull lecture, delivered halfway through the Norton series, Eliot spoke of the artist as a "perpetual upsetter of conventional values, the restorer of the real." The Norton lectures contain a number of suggestive passages: on the concept of an "auditory imagination"; on the relation of poetic technique to the "meaning" and obscurity of poetry; on the nature of the long poem; and on the blend of book learning and of personal experience in poetic imagery (prompted, in part, by Eliot's reading of Harvard professor John Livingston Lowes's study of Coleridge's sources, *The Road to Xanadu*). In these moments, the poet as critic approaches those "depths of feeling into which we cannot peer" or "feelings too obscure for the authors to know what they were."[9] If judgments on individual authors carry an air of Olympian disdain, the combative confrontation of this powerful and iconoclastic mind with a canon of English critical theorists is always an absorbing spectacle.

Eliot's credentials as a critical theorist have been disparaged but by those too willing to take his disclaimers ("My mind is too heavy and concrete for any flight of abstruse reasoning") at face value. The lucidity of these lectures disguised the fact that he was deeply versed in the scepticism of Idealist philosophy. *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* reveals a highly self-conscious critical intelligence that can be profitably compared to the speculative prose of Paul Valéry. Eliot deliberately refused to provide a theoretical system: the methodology in his Norton lectures is infused by historical relativism. His approach is as much by way of the discontinuities, as continuities, in the questions posed by major English critics: "Each age demands different things from poetry . . . [criticism] will reflect the things that the age demands." At the heart of this project is the relation between a poet and his or her reading public. Eliot explores the question of an appropriate audience, as well as the disintegration of an elite "intellectual aristocracy" into a self-regarding coterie. In some periods, there is reciprocity between creation and criticism: a new critical lexicon is best forged by poets. If Eliot is unexcited by the colonization of academic literary criticism by linguistics, psychology, sociology, philosophy, politics, and anthropology, the Norton lectures (supported by the evidence from other essays, broadcasts and reviews from these years) show how Eliot came to articulate the proposition asserted in "Religion and Literature" (1935): "Literary criticism should be completed by criticism from a definite ethical and theological standpoint."

The most important previously unpublished materials in this volume are the lecture notes to Eliot's class English 26: "Contemporary English Literature (1890 to the Present Time)." They comprise ninety-two pages of handwritten notes for twenty lectures delivered to a class of selected Harvard undergraduates from 7 February until 4 May. English 26 constitutes a remarkable account of the modern tradition in English literature from late Victorian developments, examining the sources of an opposition to the older generation of Shaw and Wells, along with a fluctuating enthusiasm for Kipling and Chesterton. Eliot explores an intriguingly restricted range of novels and stories by Henry James and Conrad for the lessons they offer to the contemporary writer. James and Conrad are admired for the complexity of their narratives and for an unflinching analysis of the psychology of evil, collapsing the frontier between civilization and barbarism. By contrast, Eliot criticizes Thomas Hardy's supposedly sadistic portrayals of the relations between men and women in *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* and in *Jude the Obscure* for the harmful influence they had on Lawrence, who studied Hardy intensively.

Eliot's consideration of the contemporary novel is focused on the twin peaks Lawrence and Joyce, entailing a decision not to discuss the work of his Bloomsbury acquaintances, Virginia Woolf and E. M. Forster. A series of three lectures pursues an extended comparison between Lawrence and Joyce, drawing a parallel, that becomes an antithesis, between the autobiographical elements in *Sons and Lovers* and *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young*

Man. Lawrence is judged the inferior writer, artistically and spiritually, due to his at times pornographic preoccupation with sexual relations; whereas Joyce's work is concerned with a more elevated "relation of man to God." Eliot appears to ground these judgments on the superiority of Joyce's Catholic education to Lawrence's Congregationalist church upbringing. In spite of a tendency to question Lawrence's stature as a novelist – in 1930, he sent a letter to the *Nation and Athenaeum* challenging E. M. Forster's obituary praise of Lawrence as "the greatest imaginative novelist of our time" – Eliot follows Murry in admiring parts of *Fantasia of the Unconscious*, in particular those sections of depth psychology probing mother and son relations, and where this peculiar treatise touches on educational reform. The students of English 26 were treated to Eliot's exegesis of the modernist techniques in *Ulysses* and in installments of "Work in Progress" (which Faber published in the Criterion Miscellany pamphlet series[10]). Drawing continuities between *Ulysses* and "Work in Progress," Eliot explicated Joyce's technique of synchronisation, a development of what he had called in his 1923 review-article on *Ulysses* "the mythical method," rendering the modern world possible for art. Eliot was closely involved with an interpretative community who had privileged access to Joyce during the writing of *Finnegans Wake*. Joyce himself was extremely self-conscious in his response (sometimes taking the form of rewriting) to the incipient reception of "Work in Progress," often a baffled failure of reception. Eliot's pathbreaking reading of this "unreadable" text in English 26, then, is a fascinating moment in the reception history of *Finnegans Wake*. The lecturer's personal acquaintance with the writers taught in this course must have fortified undergraduates as they prepared for an unusually tough end-of-term exam. One wonders how many had enough firsthand knowledge to weigh Eliot's estimation of Wyndham Lewis as "England's greatest painter."

The lectures on modern poetry traverse the same terrain as F. R. Leavis's *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932). Leavis had acknowledged "indebtedness to a certain critic and poet" with all the humility of discipleship: "How little I suppose these considerations to be original the book will make plain."[11] Eliot (that poet-critic) wrote to Leavis to say that, with some reservations, "I of course like the book very much." There are similarities between the lectures and book. Yeats, De la Mare, and the Georgian poets are placed outside the mainstream of a new poetic (Eliot does not yet fully appreciate the power of Yeats's later poetry). Eliot agrees with Leavis that *Hugh Selwyn Mauberely* is Pound's most achieved poem: his treatment of the *Cantos* is largely expository. In a testimonial helping to publicize the 1933 American edition of *The Cantos*, Eliot praised Pound's mastery of free verse rhythms, but he remained reticent on the poem's substantive content. It would be wrong, however, to suggest that Eliot was unduly influenced by Leavis (the balance of debt flowed in the other direction). There are clear differences of emphasis. Eliot was less enthusiastic than Leavis (or Richards and Read) about Hopkins's metrical innovations and his example to young poets of the 1930s; or, indeed, about the "new bearings" in English poetry that Leavis discerned in the early promise of two recent Cambridge graduates, Ronald Bottrall and Empson, who later became Faber poets. When a *New York Times* reporter inquired about up-and-coming English poets, Eliot mentioned Bottrall, Auden, Spender, and MacNeice. Although Empson's name was omitted, in time Eliot would judge him a more considerable poet than Bottrall: neither poet fulfilled Leavis's lofty expectations for the torchbearers of the Pound-Eliot tradition.

Eliot preferred not to state in public his opinions on contemporary authors. Looking ahead to English 26 in a letter to I. A. Richards, he declared: "I shall have to walk very warily not to offend literary friends and acquaintances." Eliot's candid and forthright lectures to undergraduates present unparalleled evidence of his thoughts on his contemporaries. His copious notes are published here for the first time. It is apparent that they provided raw ingredients for a number of passages in his Page-Barbour lectures, but the comments in English 26 on Christian orthodoxy and heresy are thankfully more restrained. The full "heretical" implications of Eliot's reading of three short stories exploring disillusionment in married love – Katherine Mansfield's "Bliss," Lawrence's "The Shadow in the Rose Garden," and Joyce's "The Dead" – are left implicit in Harvard. The puritanical tone (as George Santayana understood it) of Eliot's denunciation of Hardy and Lawrence in Virginia is regrettable, abandoning the light and shade of the more empathetic, literary critique offered to a few undergraduates. There was considerably greater humor and irony in the Harvard seminar room than on the Virginia platform that Eliot ascended as a self-appointed moralist. He was most persuasive when speaking as a practicing poet. Eliot prefaces English 26 by saying that it is very difficult to appreciate the work of contemporaries if one is not moving in a similar creative direction; he asks the students to be patient with his partiality for certain writers. The contrast with *After Strange Gods* is instructive.

During his time in the United States, Eliot gave several public poetry readings. Stung by perplexed responses to *Ash-Wednesday*, he accompanied these readings by remarks on the difficulty or obscurity of modern poetry, designed to disarm audiences.[12] It was a subject that he addressed several times in formal lectures. The topic had been dealt with most compellingly, however, in the 1930 preface to his translation of Saint-Jean Perse's *Anabasis*. Eliot refers to a Parisian critic, Lucien Fabre, who, in the course of discussing Perse alongside post-symbolist developments in French poetry, characterized the avant-garde poet as someone who perversely removes links in the chain of discursive logic. Likewise, Eliot's preface defends the modernist poet's employment of a "logic of the imagination" – instead of the articulate energy of a "logic of concepts" – with the claim that the intensity of a succession of images outweighs a danger of structural incoherence. The self-reflexive technique of avant-garde poetics – a controlled explosion destroying narrative and logical links – produces a deliberately obscure text that is resistant to explication and will therefore appeal only to a select audience. In a preface to Harry Crosby's *Transit of Venus* (1931), Eliot says that it is necessary for a poet to "risk complete failure" in the search for fresh forms of expression. The preface to *Anabasis* updates the aesthetics of the post-Baudelairean French tradition that Eliot had discovered in Arthur Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature*. He returns to the obscurity of modern poetry in his Norton lectures, claiming the difficulty of poetry can be categorized into three types: first, "there may be personal cases which make it impossible for a poet to express himself in any way but an obscure way"; second, a sheer novelty that intimidates an unprepared readership; third, "there is the difficulty raised by the author's having left out something which the reader is used to finding." Obscurity may be a failure of communication or the product of courageous artistic integrity.[13] In his Yale lecture on the English poets as letter writers, Eliot seized on a wartime remark by D. H. Lawrence on the "stark, bare, rocky directness of statement, this alone makes poetry, today." Eliot went on to express the desire to write poetry so "transparent" that it leads the reader "beyond" poetry to what it "points at," gesturing at the same time to the sublimity of Beethoven's late string quartets. He had discussed these quartets, revolutionary in formal structure, in a letter to Stephen Spender of 28 March 1931: "There is a sort of heavenly or at least more than human gaiety about some of his later things which one imagines might come to oneself as the fruit of reconciliation and relief after immense suffering; I should like to get something of that into verse once before I die" (*L5* 529).

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On his return to the United Kingdom in June 1933, Eliot acknowledged that he had lost some of his passion for literature. How would the poet develop after the liturgical cadences of renunciation in *Ash-Wednesday*, or the analogue for the acceptance of faith traced in *Marina*? The "Landscapes" sequence, begun in America, offered some hints. "New Hampshire," which Eliot had revisited with Emily Hale, mirrors a childlike uplift ("Swing up into the apple-tree") shadowed by an older man's remorse ("Twenty years and the spring is over"). The state of mind depicted in "Virginia" ("Iron thoughts came with me / And go with me") was ominous. In 1933, the achievement of *Four Quartets* lay some years ahead and Eliot feared that his best poetry was irrevocably behind him. In the course of his American lectures, he had directed attention to the social uses of poetic drama. Eliot made the acquaintance of George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, in 1930 and through him met E. Martin Browne, the first Director of Religious Drama for the diocese of Chichester. The following year, in an article for the *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, Eliot announced that if he were the dean of a cathedral: "I should pay particular attention to the performance of religious drama." This interest in religious drama would eventually lead to a commission to write verse choruses and dialogue for a pageant play, *The Rock*, which was performed to raise funds to build forty-five churches in the north London suburbs. In November 1933, living alone in temporary lodgings, Eliot embarked upon a new literary direction – composing verse choruses. "The poet of the greatest possibilities" he observed, "is disgusted always with what he has already done: or rather, relatively disgusted, for we must turn even our greatest failures to great account." Yet hopes for creative renewal did little to assuage the guilty qualms ascribed to the "honest poet" in the concluding lecture of *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, who worried that he had "wasted his time and messed up his life for nothing."

NOTES

1. *The Diary of Virginia Woolf: Volume Four, 1931-1935*, ed. Anne Olivier Bell (London: Hogarth Press, 1982), 178.

2. Paul Elmer More, "The Cleft Eliot," *Saturday Review*, 9 (12 Nov 1932), 235.

3. Eliot later described his marriage to Vivien as "a Dostoevsky novel written by Middleton Murry." Eliot had found the exhibitionism of John Middleton Murry, an unsuccessful novelist and author of a 1916 critical study of Dostoevsky, as well as his reliance on the radical individualism of the "inner voice," distasteful during a protracted public exchange throughout

the 1920s. Eliot's remark was recalled by Valerie Eliot, the poet's second wife, in an interview published in the *Observer* of 20 Feb 1972 (21).

4. Vivien Eliot's diaries are held in her archive at the Bodleian Library, Oxford.

5. Scott Fitzgerald's remark is quoted in *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Ronald Schuchard (London: Faber, 1993), 242.

6. Empson's remark was made in the introduction to his unpublished 1974 Clark Lectures and is quoted in *Essays on Renaissance Literature: Volume One, Donne and the New Philosophy*, ed. John Haffenden (Cambridge UP, 1993), 1.

7. In "A Short View of Russia" (1925), Keynes observed: "if Communism achieves a certain success, it will achieve it, not as an improved economic technique, but as a religion." *Essays in Persuasion* (London: Macmillan, 1931), 129.

8. George Saintsbury, *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste: Volume Two, From the Renaissance to the Decline of Eighteenth Century Orthodoxy* (Edinburgh: Blackwood, 1905), 478.

9. In a letter to I. A. Richards of 11 Nov 1931, Eliot acknowledges that: "a good poem should have a potentiality of evoking feelings and associations in the reader of which the author is wholly ignorant. . . . My best poems are possibly those which evoke the greatest number and variety of interpretations surprising to myself" (*L5* 732).

10. Because of censorship laws, *Ulysses* was not yet available in the United Kingdom or United States.

11. F. R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), 1.

12. Francis Birrell's review of *Ash-Wednesday* in the *Nation and Athenaeum* of 31 May 1930 complained: "The main difficulty I have in facing this remarkable poem is that I do not understand what it is all about" (293).

13. In a letter to Reverend Geoffrey Curtis of 17 June 1930, Eliot divided the obscurity of poetry into "good" and "bad" types: "the bad, which merely puzzles or leads astray; the good, that which is the obscurity of any flower: something simple and to be simply enjoyed, but merely incomprehensible as anything living is incomprehensible" (*L5* 220).

EDITORIAL PROCEDURES AND PRINCIPLES

I. PUBLISHED PROSE

Criteria for Inclusion

Eliot's uncollected prose makes up the vast majority of the writings published in his lifetime and spans the period from his stories in the *Smith Academy Record* in 1905 to his final autobiographical note for the *Harvard College Class of 1910: Fifty-fifth Anniversary Report*, contributed in late December 1964, shortly before his death on 4 January 1965. These writings include hundreds of reviews and essays contributed to periodicals; commentaries in the *Criterion*; letters to the press (printed here and in the *Letters*; in each place they appear in different contexts of personal letters and public prose, thereby inviting separate readings and annotation); lectures and addresses published separately in wrappers or in boards; introductions, prefaces, and forewords to books and to translations of his works in foreign languages; testimonials and other contributions to domestic and foreign newspapers; and public broadcasts published or excerpted in the *Listener*. Among his own letters to the press are those of which he was a signatory with one or more others. As his role in their authorship is uncertain, these signed letters, which began in 1927 and increased in number in later decades, will be included in a separate section, "Letters and Documents with Multiple Authorship."

Chronology

With a few exceptions, the editors have arranged the majority of Eliot's unpublished and published prose writings in the original order of composition or publication to allow the reader to follow closely his developing patterns of thought as he immersed himself in intellectual journalism and literary criticism from year to year, decade to decade. The primary volumes of collected essays, together with their prefaces and introductions, have been disassembled and their contents returned to chronological order alongside the uncollected and unpublished prose.

Less than 10 percent of Eliot's prose writings underwent textual changes when they were reprinted or collected; most pieces were never revisited after their first publication in periodical and other forms. Some reviews and essays, however, particularly those included in *The Sacred Wood*, were combined and revised by Eliot as new essays: successively published reviews of books on Ben Jonson in November 1919, on Philip Massinger in May-June 1920, and on Swinburne and others in the two-part "The Perfect Critic" in July 1920. The original reviews were redacted as such and included in the volume under the first title of each pair. He collapsed three other reviews published between September and December 1919 under the title "Imperfect Critics" for the volume. Moreover, "Eeldrop and Appleplex" and "Tradition and the Individual Talent," originally published in two separate parts months apart, have been combined into a single piece. In such uncharacteristic cases, we have sacrificed adherence to chronology in order to present the complete texts, but not without indicating the separate chronological positions and titles and recording significant textual changes.

A few other considerations have led us to relax the chronological order of publication in specific instances, including Eliot's doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley, a draft of which was completed and approved in 1916 but not edited and published until 1964. The editors have placed this lengthy work neither intrusively into the published reviews of 1916, nor awkwardly out of context in 1964, but logically at the end of the graduate essays of 1913-15, essays that led to and were organically drawn upon for the dissertation. In presenting a corrected, re-edited, and more readable critical text in that position, the editors have drawn upon the original dissertation typescript, the proofs and correspondence of the suppressed first printing (1963), and the proofs and text of the 1964 edition.

The three volumes of university lectures – *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, *After Strange Gods, The Idea of a Christian Society* – as well as *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*, have been kept intact and edited as the coherent, self-contained works that they were intended to be; however, when individual lectures were published separately, the publication data and any alterations are recorded in the textual notes. The Clark Lectures (1926) and Turnbull Lectures (1933), edited and published together posthumously as *The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry* (1993), have also been kept intact, each re-edited and included separately and chronologically in respective volumes. The dates of composition of individual reviews, essays, and lectures are given when they are known.

In volume 4 (1930-1933), the chronology has been altered to present together the majority of his lectures in America as the Charles Eliot Norton professor at Harvard during the 1932-33 academic year. These include his Norton and Turnbull lectures and individual lectures written for delivery at numerous American institutions, together with the editorial reconstruction of five lectures destroyed before his return to England in June 1933. The unit is preceded by a separate "Chronology of Lectures and Readings." Those lectures that were not published until later in 1933 have been arranged by date of delivery, with subsequent publication information given in the notes. Eliot's Page-Barbour lectures, however, delivered at the University of Virginia in May 1933 but substantially revised before publication as *After Strange Gods* in 1934, appear in accordance with their publication date in volume 5 (1934-1939).

Standardization of Formats

Eliot's prose in little magazines and periodicals appears under a variety of house styles: the divergent formats, typography, spacing, and indents for paragraphs and set-off quotations have all been standardized. As the bibliographical descriptions and kinds of information provided for books under review also varied considerably from periodical to periodical, these descriptions have been standardized in the heading, as have the descriptions and dates of the periodicals in which the reviews first appeared. Unsigned reviews and essays are indicated as such in the heading or in an initial note; all opening and closing signatures – signed or initialed – and pseudonyms are placed at the right margin at the end of the text.

Titles

Before 1919, many of Eliot's reviews were untitled; thereafter, most were titled unless they appeared as part of a "Commentary" in the *Criterion*. Since many reviews were given their titles by the editors of the periodicals in which they appeared, and since Eliot and his editors occasionally changed the titles of those essays that he chose to collect in book form, the editors have provided Eliot's final title ("Hamlet"), with the first and American titles ("Hamlet and his Problems") given in the notes. Titles of reviews, and titles under which Eliot's letters to editors of periodicals and newspapers appeared, were presumably supplied by his editors but are retained for ease of recognition.

Prose Transcription Errors

Under pressure to meet deadlines, Eliot frequently made transcription errors when quoting passages of prose from other authors. His editors were often inattentive to these matters, and frequently did not arrange for him to read proof. Thus, the editors of the present edition have silently restored dropped words, supplied missing ellipses, added overlooked italics and quotation marks, and placed capitals made from lowercase letters in brackets. More substantial alterations are indicated in the textual notes. Eliot often provided selected page numbers for prose quotations in parentheses in the texts; when he did not do so, the editors have supplied missing numbers in brackets in the texts and in parentheses in the notes.

Misquotations of Poetry

When minor transcription errors occur in lines or passages of poetry quoted directly from a volume under review, they are silently corrected. However, some of Eliot's misquotations are more slips of memory than mistranscriptions. Such misquotations are preserved in the text and corrected in the notes. In some instances, the misquotations affect the commentary, and in every instance, it is of interest to observe how Eliot held certain passages of poetry, especially from Dante and Shakespeare, in memory and summoned them spontaneously for unchecked use. Frank Kermode, editor of Eliot's *Selected Prose* (London: Faber and Faber, 1975), took pains to point out such misquotations in Eliot's collected essays, "not from pedantry, but from a conviction that in the poet Eliot misquotation is sometimes creative" (307).

American / English Punctuation Practice

From 1909 through the preface to the second edition (1928) of *The Sacred Wood*, all of Eliot's prose was printed in what is now called American punctuation style, with double inverted commas for quotations, punctuation inside quotation marks. English periodicals such as the *Egoist*, the *Athenaeum*, the *Nation*, the *New Statesmen*, the *Bookman*, the *Spectator*, *TLS*, and others that printed Eliot's work used this common style. From the publication of *For Lancelot Andrewes* in 1928, however, all of the Faber editions of his collected essays were printed in English punctuation style, with single inverted commas, punctuation outside (inconsistently so). In editing *The Criterion*, Eliot followed the American style from 1922 to 1926, when it shifted to English style, with punctuation inconsistently inside and outside quotations. Many English periodicals, particularly those published jointly in America, continued to use the American style, and Eliot continued to publish unreprinted essays in American periodicals. Moreover, the American editions of his work systematically converted the Faber editions to American style. In an attempt to achieve uniformity and minimize error, the editors of this edition, in consultation with the publishers, and the Eliot Estate, follow the American style throughout. The earlier Faber policy of italicizing all set-off quotations in Eliot's texts has not been followed.

Translations

A number of Eliot's essays and prefaces were commissioned by a foreign audience, translated, and published only in foreign translation. The translation and the English original are both included when possible. If the original English text has not been recovered, an English translation is provided. When an English text first published in translation was revised before publication in English, the substantive alterations are noted.

Annotations

Eliot's works were translated into thirty-eight languages in his lifetime, and his writings continue to attract a worldwide readership. In annotating this edition, the editors aim to serve scholars, students, and modern readers who come to Eliot's prose from numerous languages, backgrounds, and fields of interest – not only in literary criticism but in economics, education, philosophy, politics, theology, cultural theory, popular culture, and other disciplines. Eliot was reluctant to collect much of his prose because he felt that many of his remarks, originally composed under the pressure of deadlines, would need qualification, clarification, and correction. We have attempted to create notes that will enhance and clarify his highly referential prose, and have been mindful of both the immediate and the larger intellectual context of his writings: we draw upon his correspondence; where no source is shown, it may be assumed that the original letter or carbon copy is in the collection of the Eliot Estate or at the Faber and Faber archive. When it is helpful, we make cross-references to earlier and later comments. We have attempted to identify every specific literary and nonliterary allusion; to trace all references to newspapers, periodicals, and other documents; and to identify the books and editions that he employed. As part of our larger aim to illuminate the breadth of Eliot's learning and the depths of recall that inform and enrich the texture of his critical prose, we have noted relevant inscriptions and markings in his personal copies. Eliot's own notes are indicated with an asterisk (*) after the superscript number; notes that include textual variants are indicated with a dagger (†) after the superscript.

II. UNPUBLISHED PROSE

Much of Eliot's prose was written not for publication but for reading or broadcasting to specific audiences on particular occasions: philosophical essays for postgraduate seminars, tutorials, and philosophical societies at Harvard, Oxford, and Cambridge; addresses as president of the Alliance Française, London Library, Virgil Society, Books Across the Sea, Académie Septentrionale, and other organizations; responses as recipient of honorary degrees, medals, and other honors; remarks at the opening of exhibitions and conferences; and appeals in aid of civic and charitable causes. Eliot chose to put these items aside as ephemeral materials in the life of a man of letters. Because of the scholarly interest and biographical richness that they contain, they are included, with thanks to Mrs. Eliot, in this edition. More than one hundred unpublished items, all of which are identified as such, are incorporated chronologically into the individual volumes of *The Complete Prose*. The first is an undergraduate essay, "The Defects of Kipling," written at Harvard in March 1909, and the last a telegram, "Tribute to John F. Kennedy," read by Jacqueline Kennedy at the groundbreaking ceremony for the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., on 25 November 1964.

The early philosophical essays exist in pencil or ink manuscripts and in typescripts with holograph emendations. After Eliot left graduate school, he composed nearly all of his work on a typewriter, with frequent typeovers (xxxxx) and holograph corrections and insertions. On some occasions, his first wife, Vivien, or a secretary, typed his drafts. The BBC usually retyped his broadcast scripts, which often contain last-minute emendations. In editing the large variety of Eliot's unpublished writings, we attempt to present texts that are as accurate, clear, and readable as possible, with a minimum of emendation. To distinguish them from published writings, the editors have preserved some of the physical characteristics of the manuscripts (such as underlinings), choosing not to regularize them as published items lest they lose all the visual character of their composition. The unpublished texts are introduced by headnotes that provide the occasion, date, place, and context of their preparation and presentation. The location and physical description of the manuscripts are given in the textual notes, together with editorial notation of substantial alterations and deletions made by Eliot himself.

Eliot's unpublished texts are edited according to the following additional principles:

False starts and insignificant deletions are excised, but ~~strikeouts~~, when illuminating or clarifying, are retained or given in notes.

Typed or holograph underlinings for emphasis have been retained; occasional red ribbon color changes, an alternate method of emphasizing words and phrases, are represented in bold; underlined titles and foreign words are italicized; unpunctuated or mispunctuated titles of books, plays, and poems are corrected and standardized.

Abbreviated titles, names, and places are expanded, as are ampersands, but his occasional use of cf., i.e., e.g., sc., passim, etc., have been retained, unitalicized.

Obvious typographical errors have been silently corrected; readings of illegible words are followed by a bracketed question mark [?]; most compound adjectives (seventeenth-century poetry) are hyphenated, consistent with his ordinary practice.

Eliot's variant spellings–British, American, period (to-day), alternate (behoves)–are retained; opening and / or closing inverted commas (quotation marks) have been supplied where Eliot has overlooked them; inconsistent placement of punctuation inside and outside inverted commas is standardized; missing accents and diacriticals are supplied.

When the volume and/or page numbers for a quotation are given by Eliot in the margin or in the text, the numbers are placed in parentheses at the end of the quotation or in the notes; when editorially supplied, they are placed in brackets.

Clearly superfluous or unintended punctuation (commas before parentheses), and some unintended double punctuation (;–) have been deleted or corrected. Where the omission of punctuation causes confusion, it has been supplied; when, in Eliot's hand, the use of a semicolon or colon is unclear, the editors have interpreted the punctuation in terms of clarity and grammatical structure.

Eliot's substantive marginal comments related to the text but not part of the body of the text are quoted and noted where they occur. When Eliot makes marginal statements with lines drawn for insertion in the text during the process of composition, they are identified in the notes. When it is clear that Eliot has made insertions from the margin or an appended page *after* the body of the text was drafted or completed, as in his essay on "A Neglected

> Aspect of Chapman" in volume 2, they are introduced into the text with a bracketed and italicized phrase, [*insertion*:] or [*appended insertion*:], with the end of the insertion similarly indicated [*end insertion*]. His occasional notes and outlines on the verso of a page are recorded in the textual notes.

III. FUTURE EDITIONS

The contents of this edition, which are presented in eight separate volumes, are enhanced by the inclusion of more than two hundred published items that are not recorded in the Gallup bibliography. As extensive as our collection efforts have been, we are confident that fugitive items will be found, and we encourage readers to submit them for inclusion in the edition, which is managed and maintained by Johns Hopkins University Press. A future digital platform will ensure that *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot* is a living edition, with the capacity to include newly discovered prose items, to correct errors, and to provide more illustrations and digital innovations for readers than would be possible in a print edition. To place Eliot's primary prose before scholars and readers expeditiously, the editors include only those writings in this first edition. Eventually, however, a wide range of secondary prose materials will be available, including (1) additional juvenilia; (2) "Foreign Exchanges," Eliot's monthly articles for *Lloyds Bank Monthly*, 1923-25; (3) unpublished personal notes and notes from student classes; (4) additional interviews; (5) unpublished book reports for Faber and Faber; (6) blurbs and endorsements; (7) outlines of informal talks; and (8) Eliot's translations of works by other authors, primarily for publication in the *Criterion.* As additional resources become accessible, we envision a website that contains both an increasingly comprehensive and accurate critical edition and an invaluable repository of prose materials for researchers and readers in a new digital age of Eliot studies.

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Our greatest debt is to the late Valerie Eliot, for her tireless devotion over many years to collecting, preserving, and ordering her husband's multiform writings, and for her confidence and trust in commissioning *The Complete Prose of T. S. Eliot*: *The Critical Edition*. We are also indebted to her personal assistant, Debbie Whitfield, who has graciously facilitated our access to editorial materials over several years, and to trustees Judith Hooper and Clare Reihill of the Eliot Estate.

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ABBREVIATIONS

PUBLISHED WORKS BY T. S. ELIOT

CPP	*The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969).
EAM	*Essays Ancient and Modern* (London: Faber & Faber, 1936).
EE	*Elizabethan Essays* (London: Faber & Faber, 1934).
FLA	*For Lancelot Andrewes: Essays on Style and Order* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928).
HJD	*Homage to John Dryden: Three Essays on Poetry of the Seventeenth Century* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1924).
KE	*Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (London: Faber & Faber, 1964).
IMH	*Inventions of the March Hare: Poems 1909-1917*, ed. Christopher Ricks (London: Faber & Faber, 1996).
L1	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 1: 1898-1922, revised edition, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).
L2	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 2: 1923-1925, ed. Valerie Eliot and Hugh Haughton (London: Faber & Faber, 2009).
L3	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 3: 1926-1927, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2012).
L4	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 4: 1928-1929, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2013).
L5	*The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 5: 1930-1931, ed. Valerie Eliot and John Haffenden (London: Faber & Faber, 2014).
OPP	*On Poetry and Poets* (London: Faber & Faber, 1957).
SE	*Selected Essays*, 3rd edn (London: Faber & Faber, 1951).
SW	*The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London: Methuen, 1920).

TCC	*To Criticize the Critic* (London: Faber & Faber 1965).
TWL	*The Waste Land* as printed in *The Complete Poems and Plays of T. S. Eliot* (London: Faber & Faber, 1969).
UPUC	*The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism*, 2nd edn (London: Faber & Faber 1964).
VMP	*The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry*, ed. Ronald Schuchard (London: Faber & Faber, 1993; New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1994).
WLF	*The Waste Land: A Facsimile and Transcript of the Original Drafts*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber & Faber, 1971; New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1971).

PERIODICALS

N&A	*The Nation and Athenaeum*
NRF	*La Nouvelle Revue française*
NS	*The New Statesman*
TLS	*The Times Literary Supplement*

OTHER WORKS

Contemporary Reviews	*T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews*, ed. Jewel Spears Brooker (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2004)
DC1	*The Inferno of Dante*, Temple Classics edition, trans. John Aitken Carlyle (London: J. M. Dent, 1909).
DC2	*The Purgatorio of Dante*, Temple Classics edition, trans. Thomas Okey (London: J. M. Dent, 1910).
DC3	*The Paradiso of Dante*, Temple Classics edition, trans. Philip H. Wicksteed (London: J. M. Dent, 1910).
Gallup	Donald Gallup, *T. S. Eliot: A Bibliography*, revised & extended edition (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1969).
Grierson I, II	*The Poems of John Donne*, 2 vols., ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1912).
KJV	King James Version of the Bible.
Lives	Samuel Johnson, *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets*, Chandos Classics, new edition (London: Frederick Warne, 1872).

MLP	*Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century: Donne to Butler*, ed. Herbert J. C. Grierson (Oxford: Clarendon, 1921).
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, ed. H. C. G. Matthew and Brian Harrison. 60 vols. (Oxford. Oxford University Press, 2004).
OED	*The Oxford English Dictionary*, ed. John Simpson and Edmund Weiner. 20 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).
Ser	*The Sermons of John Donne*, ed. G. R. Potter and Evelyn M. Spearing, 10 vols. (Berkeley: U of California Press, 1953-62).

ARCHIVAL COLLECTIONS

Beinecke	The Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University
Berg	Henry W. and Albert A. Berg Collection of English and American Literature, New York Public Library
Harvard	University Archives, Harvard University
Houghton	The Houghton Library, Harvard University
King's	Modern Archive Center, King's College, Cambridge
Victoria	McPherson Library, University of Victoria
Virginia	David Schwab Collection, University of Virginia

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ILLUSTRATIONS

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The COMPLETE PROSE *of*

T. S. Eliot

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A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 9 (Jan 1930) 181-84

THE FIVE REVIEWS' AWARD

In our July number we announced a new form of literary award to be conferred by five reviews: *The Criterion*, the *Europäische Revue* of Berlin, the *Nouvelle Revue Française* of Paris, the *Revista de Occidente* of Madrid and the *Nuova Antologia* of Milan. Our project, it will be remembered, was to make the award in five successive years: first for the best short story submitted in German, then for short stories in English, French, Italian and Spanish in that order; the winning piece of fiction to be printed as nearly simultaneously as possible in the five reviews. As the scheme originated with the *Europäische Revue*, it is right that the German story should be chosen first. In this number we print *The Centurion* (*Der Hauptmann von Kapernaum*) by Mr. Ernst Wiechert.[1] This story was selected unanimously by the German committee, which consisted of Dr. Max Clauss, the Editor of the *Europäische Revue*, Professor E. R. Curtius, who is very well known to readers of *The Criterion*, and Thomas Mann the novelist, who replaces the late Hugo von Hofmannsthal on the committee; it was then approved by the editors of the other four reviews.[2] We hope to be able to announce early next year the conditions for submitting manuscripts of English fiction: the manuscripts to be read first by a similar committee of three English critics, and subsequently referred to the editors of the four European reviews.[3]

We take particular pleasure in the inception of this form of international activity (though we cannot take any credit for the idea itself). It is not merely a means of bringing to notice new prose writers in five languages, or a means of comparing the methods and views of the writers of five peoples. We remark upon it still more as visible evidence of a community of interest, and a desire for co-operation, between literary and general reviews of different nations, which has been growing steadily since 1918, and which is now so much more pronounced than at any time before the war as to be almost a new phenomenon. All of these periodicals, and others, have endeavoured to keep the intellectual blood of Europe circulating throughout the whole of Europe; and perhaps at no time during the nineteenth century was this circulation so healthy as it is now. It is of vital importance that the best thought and feeling of each country of high civilization should be contributed to the others while it is still fresh. Only so can there be any direction towards that higher community which existed in some ways throughout the middle ages, which persisted into the eighteenth century, and which was only dissolved finally after the Napoleonic wars. And without such intellectual community and co-operation of different organs in one body all peace pacts, world congresses, disarmament discussions, and reform leagues appear merely to be concerned with the body and not with the soul.

NATIONALISM, DISARMAMENT, AND PEACE

We hope, next year, to publish in *The Criterion*, some discussions from various points of view and by critics of several nationalities, on the subjects of Nationalism and International Relations. Half a dozen serious books, and many more less serious ones, have lately been written; Mr. Macdonald, we all know, has lately been to America; every successful politician has sound views on international amity.[4] On the other hand, a push – not so far under very good omens – has been made for "Empire Free Trade"; and we have heard something of a new "war" between Europe and America in which the munitions are to be cheaper and cheaper motor cars.[5] We are given to believe that the Conservative Party is defunct, which indeed it looks to be, but also that it can only be revived (or "gingered") by elements which do not appear to be either Conservative, Liberal, or Radical, but merely Irresponsible. The only merit of the Labour Party, from the same point of view, appears to be that it is at the moment quite inert: one party being approved for that for which the other is condemned. These are unpleasant symptoms. But we can hardly believe that there are not, scattered over the continents of Europe and America, a few men of thought and observation, who are concerned with the Theory of Politics. And we are very badly in need of that; and half a dozen Aristotles working together would be only enough to supply the need. All that we have is confusion of voices in popular discussion, exaggerating the importance of various details. Perhaps the most significant thing about the War is its *insignificance*; and it is this insignificance which makes it so acutely tragic. Perhaps *fear* of war is now rather an incentive, than a preventive, of war. It is easy to convince people of the horrors, and of the harm that war does; but it is at least as important to convince them that it does no good, and has no grandeur, and that "the sense of glory" has other, and only other, means of expression.

A NOTE ON THE PRESS

It is, or was for several years, a commonplace of dignified political observation that the "popular press" has now no influence on opinion. It may be true that certain potentates of the press have not the influence that they think they have; it may be true that when they set out to divert public opinion in one direction it flies in another. But stupidity and vanity do not always mean powerlessness; they only make power more dangerous. It is true that the common newspaper reader no longer consciously asks his paper to provide his opinions for him; but that would be a superior state of consciousness to what actually exists. What the reader allows his paper to do for him is to select what is important and to suppress what is unimportant, to divert his mind with shallow discussions of serious topics, to destroy his wits with murders and weddings and curates' confessions, and to reduce him to a condition in which he is less capable of voting with any discrimination at the smallest municipal election,[6] than if he could neither read nor write. To amuse people is to have power over them; and power is power, even if its possessors have not the slightest notion what they are doing with it.

A NOTE ON OUR REVIEWS

The fact that the bulk of book publication takes place twice a year, in the autumn and the spring, occasions some trouble to the editor of any quarterly review. In this number, for instance, we have been obliged to omit some important reviews; and other important books, such as Dr. Bridges's poem, have appeared too late for review.[7] In apology, we remind our readers that it is the function of a quarterly review to review at leisure, and to allow its reviewers ample time to present their mature views upon any book worth reviewing. There have appeared recently a number of books which our readers might expect to find reviewed in this number. Some of those absent will be reviewed in the spring number. When some important books are ignored altogether, the reader must remember that we aim to review adequately those books which we do review, rather than to give a complete survey of the best of the season. For such a survey, one must turn to periodicals which appear at more frequent intervals.

NOTES

1. "The Centurion," trans. Marjorie Gabain, *Criterion*, 9 (Jan 1930), 185-200. On 18 Dec 1929, TSE informed Max Clauss that he was attempting to interest the American periodical *Hound and Horn* in publishing this story, adding: "I like the story, but I do not know how it will

succeed" (*L4* 717). Ernst Wiechert (1887-1950), a vocal critic of the Nazis during the 1930s, was imprisoned in Buchenwald concentration camp.

2. Max Clauss (1901-88), German editor and journalist, author of *Das politische Frankreich vor dem Kriege* (1928) [*French Politics before the War*]; Thomas Mann (1875-1955), Nobel Prize–winning novelist (1929), later contributed essays on contemporary German politics and Freud's thought to the *Criterion*.

3. TSE wrote to Clauss on 3 Jan 1930: "I should like to hear from you very soon about the next year's competition, so that we can announce it in the next issue. I think that the notoriety of simultaneous publication in five languages, together with collective payments, is sufficient inducement for young or little known writers; but I should be glad to hear from you whether you approve the association of an American periodical or not" (*L5* 10). In fact, the award did not continue beyond this first year.

4. British Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald visited the United States and Canada between 28 Sept and 1 Nov 1929 where he warned against "nationalist economics."

5. The Empire Free Trade crusade, led by the newspaper proprietors Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere, founded the United Empire Party in July 1929 to promote the political objective that the British Empire become a free trade bloc.

6. Municipal election: local annual election (every three years in London).

7. Poet Laureate Bridges published *The Testament of Beauty* in late 1929. It was an instant success, selling over 70,000 copies by 1946. In early Dec 1929, TSE wrote to Herbert Read: "considerations about Bridges become merely a question of literary politics. I want to know whether you think we should do him in the March *Criterion*, or leave him in silence – either behaviour will be misconstrued, but if the former, who is there to do it, as you can't speak again, and I don't want to?" (*L4* 690). John Gould Fletcher reviewed *The Testament of Beauty* for the *Criterion*, 9 (Apr 1930, 533-35), saying the sound of the poem "leaves an impression of pure and lasting delight" but that "What it lacks is precisely sense" (533). On 9 Aug 1930, TSE told William Force Stead that "Bridges' *Testament* is really and truly a blind spot in my eye" (*L5* 287). TSE's obituary comments on Bridges appear in "A Commentary" for July 1930 (4.141).

A review of *God: Being an Introduction to the Science of Metabiology*, by John Middleton Murry

London: Jonathan Cape, 1929. Pp. 320.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 9 (Jan 1930) 333-36

This book is a natural sequel to the author's *Life of Jesus*.[1] It is a more important book than its predecessor in that it not only generalizes the same problem into a form in which its relevancy to the modern world will be more easily recognized, but also has a more sustained clarity of expression than we are accustomed to expect from Mr. Murry. He has evidently worked hard not only to arrive at conclusions for himself, but to make them apprehensible to the reader.

The question at issue may be simply stated: Mr. Murry rejects "Humanism" in all of its forms. It is true that the philosophy or the philosophies of Humanism have not yet been fully developed; argument which may have force against Mr. Babbitt may not be applicable to Mr. Fernandez, or vice versa.[2] Nevertheless, I believe that there is a fundamental separation between Mr. Murry and anyone who would ever call himself a humanist; that is, the framework of Mr. Murry's construction is and must be definitely religious, the quality and the arrangement of his sensibility are and must be religious. Mr. Murry's search therefore, is for a view of life which shall reject rationalism, or ordinary materialistic naturalism, and supernaturalism as well. It is by no means the first attempt to find a third view. Bergsonism was another. We must make clear that whereas Humanism is a *compromise* between imperfectly joined elements of the natural and the supernatural, a faith like Mr. Murry's will probably turn out, if it is not a success, to be wholly a naturalism, or a supernaturalism, in disguise.

The first part of the book is autobiographical. It seems to have served for the author the purpose of working his mind up to the proper point at which he was able to say what he wanted to say; and it will probably have the same use for many readers. For the purpose of a review which must limit itself, the first part may be disregarded. Its chief relevance to the central idea of the book is its repudiation, from the author's experience, of the "mystical experience" by itself as religious evidence.[3] But as every student of mysticism should agree with that conclusion, and should feel no surprise at Mr. Murry's experience, and as I am quite in accord that no mystical experience in and by itself can be for human beings the guarantee of anything, as it must itself be verified in daily life, I do not need to dwell upon this point.

The interpretation of the life of Jesus is substantially the same as that put forward in the earlier book, and is open to the same objections.[4] It involves a theory of Illusion which is to me impossible as a theory of knowledge, and which I believe can be assimilated to several varieties of pragmatism.[5]

The chief development of this book over its predecessor is the theory of metabiology, which is nothing less than what Mr. Murry calls a *complete* naturalism which at the same time preserves all spiritual values. Mr. Murry would, I suppose, call the naturalism of Bergson incomplete, and the naturalism of Mr. Russell more rationalism.

One's first enquiry about a theory of "metabiology" should not be whether it is false or true – for that is merely to jump for our prejudices – but whether it has any meaning, and why. At any epoch there will be a number of terms which tend to command popular assent. To find meaning in Mr. Murry's terminology involves a modicum of what can only be called faith in certain current diction. If we are out of tune with our generation we cannot assent, not because we find the philosophy unreasonable or out of joint with the facts, but because it is meaningless to us. I find this difficulty with Mr. Murry. In order to swallow his philosophy, I suspect that I should have had to swallow a number of other things first, so as to accept a number of terms *without requiring definition* of them. Words like *emergent*, *organism*, *biological unity of life*, simply do not rouse the right "response" in my breast. They are terms which may have definite meanings within the restricted field of discourse of biology; but a philosophy based upon biological knowledge is a different thing from biology. To call it *metabiology* seems to me a verbal trick; playing on the useful pun of "physics" and "metaphysics." When we proceed from words to phrases, and from phrases to sentences, the difficulties multiply. Mr. Murry says:

> "Value" is creative newness in the organic process of the universe; more than this, it is creative newness which maintains itself. [182]

In this sentence value is defined in terms which to me need more explication than the term "value."[6] What is the difference between newness which is creative and plain newness? Perhaps "creative newness" is "organic newness," but that does not help me much. In any case creation is hardly creation unless it creates something new. But why creative newness, or organic novelty as we might call it, should *be* Value I cannot puzzle out. We are told that the value of a poem or a temple (183) consists simply in its power to maintain itself as an object of response.[7] But surely it must consist in its power to maintain itself as the object of the particular response which assigns to it value. And is its "power" anything more than a metaphorical way of saying that people have continued to respond to it in ways which have a common element? Metabiology seems to me to be a philosophy which employs terms which appeal to the biological imagination. And I cannot believe that the biological imagination is as permanent as the religious one,[8] or that Mr. Murry's philosophy is more than a variant of that philosophy of our time of which we have other "significant variations" in Bergson, Driesch, Whitehead or Eddington or Lloyd Morgan.[9]

On page 184 I find the word "organic" five times; "metabiological" three times; "variation" twice.[10]

In this short note I have merely tried to express my own fundamental difficulty with the book: it may be no difficulty to others. From my point of view, the book has also a very important merit: though Mr. Murry seems to me in the end to offer only a variation of biological naturalism, yet he has seen far more clearly than others the real issue; the choice that one must make, the fact that you must either take the whole of revealed religion or none of it. And he shows a really remarkable understanding of Catholicism; it may even seem that he understands Catholicism better than he understands his own beliefs.[11]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. On 3 Oct 1929, TSE wrote to Murry: "Your book I have read twice, and must write about: it is, I think, much more important than the *Life of Jesus*, and will take all my strength to answer. Of course I believe you to be wrong (as far as the word 'wrong' has meaning); but I think you have made a good job of it, and you have given me something much more difficult to demolish than any constructions of Babbitt or Russell. So you have done what you meant to do. Anyway, the book does clarify the issues: and that will be the chief point of anything I say about it" (*L4* 622). TSE reviewed Murry's *The Life of Jesus* (1926) in the *Criterion* of May 1927 (3.59).

2. On 17 Aug 1929, TSE recommended Murry's forthcoming *God* to Fernandez. This issue of the *Criterion* contained Fernandez's essay "A Humanist Theory of Value" to which Murry responded in "The Detachment of Naturalism" (*Criterion*, July 1930) 642-60.

3. Murry recounts the mystical experience he had in Apr 1923, following the death of his wife Katherine Mansfield, as the grounds for his new science of metabiology: "The immediate experience of an all-pervading Unity" (129).

4. In his review of *The Life of Jesus*, TSE reproached Murry for his denial of the divinity of Christ. In *God*, Murry asks us to regard Jesus "simply and solely as a man. There is nothing divine about him" (86).

5. According to Murry, Jesus's illusion was to believe "that he would be transfigured and become Messiah" (109).

6. In response to TSE's criticism in "The Detachment of Naturalism," Murry stated: "Fundamentally, the act of valuing is the assertion, implicit or explicit, that an object, an attitude, or an act is conducive (or prejudicial), directly or indirectly, to the harmonious maintenance of the human organism" (647).

7. Murry: "A poem or temple which maintains itself as an object of metabiological response was once the organic extension of its creator, no less inherent to himself as biological individual than the fingers of his hand; its 'value' consists simply in its power to maintain itself as an object of response" (183).

8. In "The Detachment of Naturalism," Murry responded by saying that TSE's formulation "biological imagination" was a "chimaera" and that this sentence was "confused" (653-54).

9. Sir Arthur Eddington, theoretical physicist, author of the bestseller *The Nature of the Physical World* (1928); Conwy Lloyd Morgan (1852-1936), comparative psychologist and philosopher, author of *Life, Mind and Spirit* (1926), which detected a divine plan in evolution.

10. In fact, the words "organic" and "metabiological" each appear four times on page 184.

11. On 30 Dec 1929, after sending him the *Criterion* proofs, TSE wrote to Murry: "I think you are very tolerant of my review of you" (*L4* 743).

A review of *Baudelaire and the Symbolists: Five Essays*, by Peter Quennell

London: Chatto & Windus, 1929. Pp. xii + 221.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 9 (Jan 1930) 357-59

Mr. Quennell has done for his generation what Arthur Symons did many years ago with his *Symbolist Movement in Literature*.[1] I am not disposed to disparage Mr. Symons's book; it was a very good book for its time; it did make the reader want to read the poets Mr. Symons wrote about. I myself owe Mr. Symons a great debt: but for having read his book, I should not, in the year 1908, have heard of Laforgue or Rimbaud; I should probably not have begun to read Verlaine; and but for reading Verlaine, I should not have heard of Corbière.[2] So the Symons book is one of those which have affected the course of my life.[3] Nevertheless, it was time that a new book on the same subject should be written, omitting, as does Mr. Quennell very rightly, Maeterlinck.[4] Whoever reads the one book ought to read the other, certainly; but we are no longer in a flush of discovery: the poets of whom Mr. Quennell treats are now as much in our bones as Shakespeare or Donne:[5] the need is for what is called appraisal.

The chief fault I have to find with Mr. Quennell's book is the form, *five essays*. One anticipates – five essays, essays as Mr. Symons wrote them, starting afresh and with fresh enthusiasm on each author. But these are not really five essays; they are five chapters in one whole essay on a part of the great subject of Post-Romanticism.[6] I found Mr. Quennell's first essay, that on Baudelaire (the key poet not included in Mr. Symons's volume, and a poet whom Mr. Symons has fumbled more badly than the minor successors)[7] the least satisfactory on first reading. For there is a great deal more to be said about Baudelaire than Mr. Quennell has said. On the other hand, Baudelaire is so much greater a man than all of his successors, that he cannot be confined, as can they, within one essay. Therefore the difficulty of a scheme such as Mr. Quennell has adopted, is that a master like Baudelaire must be reduced to those aspects in which the least among his significant disciples can be profitably compared with him.

With this reservation, – or making on Mr. Quennell's behalf a statement which I feel he should have made for himself, – the essay on Baudelaire is an admirable study, and except for the studies of Laforgue and Mallarmé, really the best in the book. It is the first of a sequence of studies in the post-mortem of Romanticism, and in the insurgence of something which can hardly be called classicism, but which may decently be called Counter-Romanticism. The difficulty is that the minor men can be wholly, and even more than generously, confined within what can beyond question be called literary criticism; whereas any adequate criticism of Baudelaire must inevitably lead the critic outside of *literary* criticism. For it will not do to label Baudelaire; he is not merely, or in my opinion even primarily, the *artist*; and if I compared him with anyone in his own century, it would be to Goethe and to Keats – that is to say, I should place him with men who are important first because they are human prototypes of new experience, and only second because they are poets. I think that Mr. Quennell is not unaware of this, for in one of his best sentences on Baudelaire he says:

> He had enjoyed a *sense of his own age*, had recognised its pattern when the pattern was yet incomplete, and – because it is only our misapprehension of the present which prevents our looking into the immediate future, our ignorance of to-day and of its real as apart from its spurious tendencies and requirements – had anticipated many problems, both on the aesthetic and on the moral plane, in which the fate of modern poetry is still concerned. [64]

This affirmation is, I believe, certainly true: it is this "sense of the age" that is important about Baudelaire, and is what he imparted, in varying fractions, to his minor successors. And a "sense of one's age" implies some sense of other ages; so that Baudelaire's sense of Racine is integral with his sense of his own age.[8]

Of course, the short period in which Baudelaire lived was a muddled one. Although *literary* criticism compels us to consider Villiers and Gérard de Nerval when we consider the whole movement after Baudelaire, we must remember that Villiers and Gérard (and Huysmans, a sort of Zola crossed capriciously with all that is least important about Baudelaire) are distractions from the main issue.[9] I complain against Mr. Quennell that he ought to have ignored Villiers, except as a footnote upon others; for Villiers at this moment is a mere period piece, a curiosity of the fashions of popular philosophy, more dignified only by being longer dead, than a Maeterlinck.

Even Mr. Quennell's industry cannot make Villiers interesting, any more interesting than a reproduction of a photograph of a lady on a bicycle in 1897. The only important successors of Baudelaire are Laforgue, Corbière and Mallarmé.

One difference between Baudelaire and the later poets – Laforgue, Verlaine, Corbière, Rimbaud, Mallarmé – is that Baudelaire not only reveals the troubles of his own age and predicts those of the age to come, but also foreshadows some issue from these difficulties. When we get to Laforgue, we find a poet who seems to express more clearly even than Baudelaire the difficulties of his own age: he speaks to us, or spoke to my generation, more intimately than Baudelaire seemed to do.[10] Only later we conclude that Laforgue's "present" is a narrower present than Baudelaire's, and that Baudelaire's present extends to more of the past and more of the future.

Mr. Quennell might, I think, have made more of the influences of English literature; he might have made more of the German influences upon Laforgue, particularly the influence of Schopenhauer and Hartmann;[11] and of the generally "Nordic" cast of Symbolism, with its contrast in the meridional construction of Valéry.[12] In his actual writing, he indulges himself in metaphor and simile; he has an exuberance of style which often confuses, but sometimes rewards with a striking remarkable phrase.[13] But his book is a good book on what is the most important part of the history of the poetry of the nineteenth century. I look back to the dead year 1908; and I observe with satisfaction that it is now taken for granted that the current of French poetry which sprang from Baudelaire is one which has, in these twenty-one years, affected all English poetry that matters.[14] Mr. Symons's book is one milestone, and Mr. Quennell's will be another.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Peter Quennell (1905-93), poet and critic, was Professor of English at Tokyo Bunrika Daigaku. Quennell came to TSE's attention after the publication of his *Poems* (1926). On 4 May 1927, TSE advised Quennell to write a book on the French Symbolists doing "what Symons did for them for his own time" (*L3* 498). TSE published Quennell's article on Jules Laforgue in the *Criterion* for Mar 1928 but rejected a later article on Corbière. On 18 Oct 1929, TSE acknowledged receipt of Quennell's book and drafted his review during Nov.

2. TSE borrowed Symons's *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* (1899) from the library of the Harvard Union in Dec 1908 when the second (American) edition appeared.

3. On 14 Nov 1923, TSE wrote to Symons to acknowledge "a peculiar debt of gratitude to your *Symbolist Movement* for that was my introduction . . . to a poetry which has been one of the strongest influences on my life" (*L2* 275).

4. TSE read Symons's chapter "Maeterlinck as a Mystic" in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* and compared Maeterlinck's mysticism to Bergson's in his 1916 Oxford University Extension lectures on Modern French Literature (1.475).

5. In "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), TSE, in the course of drawing an analogy between the French symbolists and the "school of Donne," remarked that "Racine or Donne looked into a good deal more than the heart. One must look into the cerebral cortex, the nervous system, and the digestive tracts" (2:382).

6. On 18 Oct 1929, TSE told Quennell that his "book is really (as I found) a whole, instead of a collection of incoherent essays like Symons's" (*L4* 645).

7. A chapter on Baudelaire did not appear in *The Symbolist Movement in Literature* until the revised third edition of 1919.

8. In "The Metaphysical Poets," TSE declared that Racine and Baudelaire "are in some ways more like each other than they are like anyone else," describing them as "the greatest two psychologists, the most curious explorers of the soul" (2:382).

9. In his fifth Clark lecture, TSE described Nerval as "so baffling a poet . . . about whom I have never yet been able to make up my mind" (2:695), and in the eighth observed that Baudelaire "begat Huysmans" (2:743).

10. Recalling his discovery of Laforgue in 1908, TSE remarked in a letter of 8 Aug 1917: "I do not think that I have come across any other writer since who has meant so much to me as he did at that particular moment" (*L1* 212).

11. In his Clark lectures, TSE notes the influence on Laforgue of the "Kantian pseudo-Buddhism of Schopenhauer and Hartmann" (2:746). Quennell, however, deliberately ignores these German philosophers, remarking: "Library toil and the habit of research postulate a good many sources; yet the influences he [Laforgue] suffered were mainly local" (135).

12. meridional: (OED) "of or relating to southern Europe, esp. the south of France." TSE is evidently thinking of the French adjective "méridional," Valéry having been born in Sète, a town on the Mediterranean coast, and raised in Montpellier.

13. Writing to John Hayward on 29 Oct 1929, TSE said that Quennell's book "has an often irritating style, but he says some good things" (*L4* 661). Hayward concurred, observing in his anonymous *TLS* review (28 Nov 1929): "sometimes Mr. Quennell is overwhelmed by his very large vocabulary" and by "over-concentrations of expression" (996).

14. This subject was first treated in depth by Gladys Rosaleen Turquet-Milnes in *The Influence of Baudelaire in France and England* (1913).

An unsigned review of *A Game at Chesse*, by Thomas Middleton, ed. R. C. Bald

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1929. Pp. 172.[1]

The Times Literary Supplement, 1460 (23 Jan 1930) 56

Thomas Middleton is conspicuously an Elizabethan dramatist who has been highly praised, but who has never yet received his due. That is not altogether the fault of the critics. The work of Webster, for instance, even with the perplexingly inferior later plays, is comparatively easy to grasp as a whole; so is that of Ford, or that of Tourneur – if he be Tourneur; even Chapman has received in recent years an amount of scholarly attention which makes him easier for the critic to appraise.[2] But the work of Middleton is more various than that of any other Elizabethan except Shakespeare himself; and being so much inferior to Shakespeare with therefore so much the less coherent pattern in his carpet, he is more difficult to place justly than Shakespeare.[3] Of Shakespeare superlatives may not always be illuminating, but they can never be quite wrong; but with Middleton we must confine ourselves to the more hazardous vocabulary of comparatives. And with Middleton, more perhaps than with any other Elizabethan dramatist, criticism waits upon scholarship. No one collaborated more freely; and his own variety is complicated by his readiness to work with almost anybody.[4]

It is all the more remarkable that one of the finest plays of Middleton, one which has never been attributed, even in part, to anyone else, *A Game at Chesse*, should have remained so long unedited.[5] It is, of course, in the edition of Dyce, and in that of Bullen, who, in editing this play, cannot be said to have improved upon Dyce; but until the appearance of this text by Mr. R. C. Bald, it has not received adequate scholarly attention.[6] Swinburne, to be sure, speaks highly of it; but among Swinburne's many encomiums his praise of *A Game at Chesse* is hardly noticeable. Swinburne called it "complete and exquisite," and "the only work of English poetry which may properly be called Aristophanic."[7] We must take "Aristophanic," of course, in a Swinburnian sense; but even so this is high and deserved praise.[8] But as most people will have read Swinburne's eulogy in the introduction to the

"Mermaid" Middleton, and as *A Game at Chesse* is not included in the "Mermaid" collection, Swinburne's applause will have fallen upon deaf as well as deafened ears.[9] Yet one of the few conjectures which we may safely make about this personage named Middleton is that he must have been a chess player, and that he was a poet who was fascinated by the dramatic element in the game; and we feel safe in asserting that the brilliant and ironic chess scene in *Women Beware Women* is by the same hand as *A Game at Chesse*.[10] And that it was the interest in, and the constraint of, the same game that produced the particularly orderly play by this exceedingly disorderly and even slovenly dramatist.

We should be very grateful to Mr. Bald for editing separately a text of this fine play, even though Mr. Bald is not interested primarily in either the poetry or the drama. Mr. Bald's purpose is first to exhibit a general method of textual criticism of Elizabethan plays, and secondly to make some interesting and plausible conjectures about the political background and allusions. The play has, perhaps, suffered as literature from its notoriety as a daring political satire of the day; nevertheless, this aspect is important.[11] Mr. Bald sums up all the agreed interpretation of the political satire, and adds some intelligent guesses of his own. His introduction is the best introduction to the play from the point of view of the historian. He gives full credit to the importance of the Spanish Ambassador Gondomar; and, in a few pages, a succinct description of that curious figure of De Dominis, who is certainly the original of the Fat Bishop in the play.[12] Most of the attributions of originals to the pieces in *A Game at Chesse* have, of course, been settled. We think that Mr. Bald is quite right in agreeing with Fleay, against some other scholars, that the two Queens are not the wives of the two Kings in actual life, but that they represent the Churches of England and Rome.[13] The whole dialogue is much more comprehensible on this assumption. An interesting attribution of Mr. Bald's is the conjecture that the White King's Pawn is Lionel Cranfield, Earl of Middlesex, rather than Sir Toby Matthew.[14] And Mr. Bald's assertion that the underplot of the play cannot be interpreted so exactly as the main plot has much to justify it; though it is still possible that this underplot contains references, not thoroughly worked out, to the Thirty Years' War.[15] Yet it is likely that for the contemporary audience, as for ourselves, the Black Knight (the Spanish Ambassador) and the Fat Bishop (De Dominis, sometime Dean of Windsor) were of such extreme importance that the consistency of the underplot hardly mattered. It would be a parallel in our time if some dramatist satirized in the same way, let us say, the Foreign Secretary of the moment[16] and the representative in London of some suspected foreign Power: were these two figures recognizable enough, the audience would hardly bother about the minor plot. And the interest of the Jacobean public in *A Game at Chesse* was comparable to that of the modern public in any book or play which is expected, from hour to hour, to be "withdrawn" from circulation or from the stage under pressure from public authorities.

Mr. Bald's introduction and his critical apparatus will interest students of Elizabethan texts still more than students of Elizabethan and Jacobean history and intrigue. It is impossible, in a general review of the book, to do more than summarize Mr. Bald's arguments and conclusions. There are actually five manuscripts of the play; two presumably in the hand of a well-known scrivener named Ralph Crane; one has a note, another a page of dedicatory verses, apparently in the hand of Middleton himself.[17] There are three quartos, all possibly of the year 1625. Mr. Bald believes that one manuscript (that of Trinity College, Cambridge) is in Middleton's hand, and that another (that of the Huntington collection) was completed and corrected by Middleton. Mr. Bald asks: "If" (as there is good reason to believe) "the theatrical prompt-copy of the play had been confiscated, on what materials can the numerous surviving texts have been based?" [37] He then contests the theory offered by Mr. Crompton Rhodes and Professor Dover Wilson, that a play was often "assembled" out of the individual players' parts.[18] He infers that there were loose sheets ("foul papers") in the author's handwriting, of which use was made. Of the Huntington manuscript he says:

> At II, ii, 1. 13 the scribe found that there was a gap in the papers that he was transcribing; he left a page blank and began the next page where his papers went on. But what he copied out there was the beginning of III, i, and a quarto page could not possibly contain the 250 lines he had left out. Accordingly, when Middleton was looking over and completing the manuscript, he tried deftly to bridge over the gap by adding a few of the following lines (ll. 13-19 and 48-60), altered the stage-direction *Enter fat Bishop* at the beginning of III, i. to a speech-heading, and inserted 1. 78 between ll. 56 and 57 in order to make the events of III, i. comprehensible. [38-9]

Enough has been quoted to show that Shakespeare scholars will find much interesting and controversial matter in the book, and that ordinary readers will find much that is above their heads. But though the textual theories are for experts, the historical attributions are for everybody. As for the literary and dramatic merit of the piece, that is still to be studied; but the literary critic and even the mere reader of Middleton may be grateful to Mr. Bald for having provided a critical text of one of Middleton's finest plays, a play which is unique even in the great variety of the Elizabethan and Jacobean stage.[19]

NOTES

1. On 30 Nov 1929, TSE wrote to Bruce Richmond to apologize for delays reviewing *A Game at Chesse*, saying "I will do it during the week" (*L4* 689). On 3 Jan 1930, he sent the review to Richmond, adding: "The editor is not in the least interested in the literary or dramatic merits of the play! and his textual ingenuities are too deep for me. . . . All that I can say (as you will see) is that here is a good text at last of a fine play" (*L5* 12). TSE published Mario Praz's review of Bald's edition in the *Criterion* for July 1930 (782). Robert Cecil Bald (1901-65) of the University of Adelaide was chairman of the Editorial Committee of the Renaissance English Text Society.

2. On 3 Jan 1930, TSE told Richmond: "we know a lot more about Chapman than Swinburne did" (*L5* 12).

3. In his introduction to *The Wheel of Fire*, TSE also alludes to Henry James's story *The Figure in the Carpet* (1896) – in which a critic becomes obsessed with discerning a pattern in the work of a cryptic novelist – when discussing Shakespeare's oeuvre (4.145).

4. Middleton collaborated with Thomas Dekker, John Ford, Thomas Heywood, William Rowley, William Shakespeare, John Webster, and others.

5. Performed in 1624 at the Globe, *A Game at Chesse* ran for nine consecutive days to packed audiences until it was suppressed by the authorities.

6. *Works*, 5 vols, ed. Alexander Dyce (1840); *Works*, 8 vols, ed. Arthur Henry Bullen (1885-86).

7. *The Age of Shakespeare* in *The Complete Works of Algernon Charles Swinburne*, ed. Edmund Gosse and Thomas James Wise (London: Heinemann, 1925), 395.

8. Aristophanic (OED): "resembling or pertaining to the Athenian comic dramatist Aristophanes." In 1932, TSE published *Sweeney Agonistes: Fragments of an Aristophanic Melodrama*.

9. TSE owned a copy of the two-volume Mermaid Series edition of *Thomas Middleton*, ed. Havelock Ellis with an introduction by Swinburne (1887).

10. In II.ii of *Women Beware Women* (1657), Bianca is seduced by the Duke of Florence while her mother-in-law's attention is diverted by a game of chess. The dialogue about mating moves comments ironically on the duke's seduction. TSE alludes to this chess game in his note to line 137 of *The Waste Land*.

11. *A Game at Chesse* deals allegorically with the failed attempt of Prince Charles in 1623 to marry the Spanish Infanta. The play reflected popular dislike of this match, but it gave great offense to James I and the Spanish ambassador.

12. Count Gondomar, Diego Sarmiento de Acuña (1567-1626), Spanish ambassador in London. Bald concludes: "The figure of Gondomar, as the Black Knight, is drawn with great gusto and satiric force in *A Game at Chesse*; he dominates the play, and his chuckling speeches

of sardonic self-revelation must undoubtedly have been its principal attraction" (7). Marco Antonio de Dominis (1560-1624), Archbishop of Spalato, was an ecumenist who travelled to England in 1616, where he was welcomed at the Court of James I and appointed dean of the Royal Chapel of Windsor.

13. In his *Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama*, vol 2 (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891), Frederick Gard Fleay (1831-1909) identified the two Queens with the Churches of England and Rome (106).

14. Bald was the first scholar to associate the "humble origin and his elevation to high rank" of the White King's Pawn with Lionel Cranfield, first Earl of Middlesex (1575-1645), "who began life as a city apprentice and rose to be Lord Treasurer" (11). Sir Toby Matthew was a courtier, eldest son of the Archbishop of York.

15. The Thirty Years' War (1618-48) began in the Austrian Monarchy, later spreading to most of Europe. Initially the conflict was characterized by religious wars between Catholics and Protestants in the Holy Roman Empire. The case for references to the Thirty Years' War in the subplot of *A Game at Chesse* was made by E. C. Morris in "The Allegory of *A Game at Chesse*," *English Studies*, 38 (1907), 39-52.

16. Arthur Henderson was Foreign Secretary at the time.

17. Ralph Crane (*fl.* 1589-1632) was a scrivener to the King's Men, the theatrical company for whom Middleton (and Shakespeare) wrote. After TSE's review a sixth manuscript of *A Game at Chesse* was discovered.

18. The textual scholars Raymond Crompton Rhodes (1887-1935) and John Dover Wilson proposed this theory in *Shakespeare's First Folio* (1923) and *The Task of Heminge and Condell* (1924), respectively.

19. On 3 Jan, TSE told Richmond that reviewing Bald's edition had made "me want to scrap my essay on Middleton (3.122) and write another, longer and better one" (*L5* 12).

Poetry and Propaganda[1]

The Bookman (New York), 70 (Feb 1930) 595-602

The text for this paper is taken from Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World*, page 127:[2]

> The literature of the nineteenth century, especially its English poetic literature, is a witness to the discord between the aesthetic intuitions of mankind and the mechanism of science. Shelley brings vividly before us the elusiveness of the eternal objects of sense as they haunt the change which infects underlying organisms. Wordsworth is the poet of nature as being the field of enduring permanences carrying within themselves a message of tremendous significance. The eternal objects are also there for him,
>
> "The light that never was, on sea or land."[3]
>
> Both Shelley and Wordsworth emphatically bear witness that nature cannot be divorced from its aesthetic values; and that these values arise from the cumulation, in some sense, of the brooding presence of the whole onto its various parts. Thus we gain from the poets the doctrine that a philosophy of nature must concern itself at least with these six notions: change, value, eternal objects, endurance, organism, interfusion.

So far Professor Whitehead. Now I must insist clearly at the beginning that what I have to say has nothing to do with this book as a whole, or with Mr. Whitehead's theory as a whole: I am not here judging or valuing his theory or his method or his results. I am concerned only with this one chapter, which is called "The Romantic Reaction," and only with this one passage in that chapter. And only, therefore with two specific questions: can poetry be cited to *prove* anything? and to what extent can it even be cited to *illustrate* anything?

It appears to me that Mr. Whitehead is here summoning Shelley and Wordsworth to prove something in connection with what he calls a "philosophy of nature"; that is what his words *thus we gain from the poets the doctrine that*, seem to me to mean; even if the author did not mean that, it is at least what many of his readers must have taken it to mean.

When so distinguished a scientist and philosopher makes this use of poetry, a great many people will follow him, in the belief that anyone who can understand symbolic logic must certainly understand anything so simple as poetry. And indeed I must say that in the earlier part of his book Mr. Whitehead does prepare us to consent to any use of literature he may choose to make: his knowledge and appreciation of history and literature are so great, and his summaries and reviews of historical processes and periods so very skilful, his allusions so apt, that we are charmed into assent. Nevertheless, I believe that the passage I have just read is nonsense, and dangerous nonsense at that. Consider first how really remarkable it is that we should

> gain from the poets the doctrine that a philosophy of nature must concern itself at least with these six notions: change, value, eternal objects, endurance, organism, interfusion.

There are, to begin with, two steps in Whitehead's legerdemain. He has quoted, and discussed generally, two poets of one period, Shelley and Wordsworth. These two then become "the poets"; would any beginner in scientific enquiry ever exhibit such a perfect example of imperfect induction? And then the poets are said to demonstrate that a philosophy of nature must be concerned at least with the six concepts mentioned.

Let us take the first sentence:

> The literature of the nineteenth century, especially its English poetic literature, is a witness to the discord between the aesthetic intuitions of mankind and the mechanism of science.

To call the whole of English poetry of the nineteenth century to witness such a generality is certainly rash, and the meaning of the sentence is not clear. It might mean that the great English poets were all *aware* of this discord between intuitions and mechanism. In this form the statement might be true of the author of *In Memoriam*.[4] But how far is it true of Browning or Swinburne, and as far as it may be true how significant is it in their respective views of life?[5] But perhaps Mr. Whitehead means merely that poets, by affirming the reality of values, are denying by implication the sufficiency of a mechanistic philosophy. But in this form the statement is too comprehensive, for it applies to all artists at every time, as they all have affirmed the validity of esthetic intuitions. And in the proposition there are two terms to be examined, "aesthetic intuitions," and "the mechanism of science"; and we must then consider in what way there can be any "discord" between terms so disparate.

That poor old creature, "mechanistic philosophy" or "materialism" has been in our time thoroughly repudiated by its old friends the scientists, and receives no kindness from anyone but a few liberal theologians. It is not of course quite the same thing as "the mechanism of science": the latter is strictly merely the corpus of pre-Einstein and pre-Rutherford physical theory, which has been rejected more or less by physicists on the good ground that it does not account for all the facts – not on the doubtful ground that it offends poetic intuitions.[6] The mechanism of science is not the same thing as a *philosophy* based on that science, which would assert that physical science would explain the whole universe, and that what would not be explained in this way was unworthy of notice. But in any case, I find myself in the curious position of having to defend the "mechanism of science," which is no friend of mine, against an eminent scientist.[7]

Are we to suppose that a mechanistic philosophy is fundamentally antagonistic to the esthetic intuitions of mankind? That is certainly surprising, as some works of literary art seem to have been built upon it. The philosophy, such as it is, of Thomas Hardy's novels, seems to be based upon the mechanism of science. I think it is a very bad philosophy indeed, and I think that Hardy's work would be better for a better philosophy, or none at all; but there it is: has he not exploited determinism to extract his esthetic values from the contemplation of a world in which values do not count?[8] There is a more important poet than Hardy, who is Lucretius. We cannot deny "aesthetic intuitions" to Lucretius. His world was mechanical enough, in all conscience; and just because it was, Lucretius gets the particular emotional values that he does get.[9] We may admit therefore a discord between the mechanism of science and *some* esthetic intuitions; but then we shall have to say that *every* philosophy is discordant with *some* intuitions. The new philosophy of Professor Eddington, for instance, is discordant with some of the intuitions of all Christians except members of the Society of Friends;[10] the philosophy of Dante is not the ideal ground on which to reap the intuitions of Wordsworth.[11]

So far I have not questioned the term "aesthetic intuitions"; but this term is beset with ambiguity and vagueness. I suppose that Mr. Whitehead means such intuitions as are more or less common to mankind, but of which the artist is the most sensitive receiver, and without which he would not have the material for great art. But however we define the term, there is a gulf, and I think an impassible one, between the intuitions of poets *as such*, and any particular philosophy, or even any philosophical direction rather than any other. The existence of art certainly implies the reality of values, but that does not take us anywhere, and certainly points to no philosophic theory of value.

If I examined each of the sentences I should quickly grow tedious, so I will pass now to the last of them:

> Thus we gain from the poets the doctrine that a philosophy of nature must concern itself at least with these six notions: change, value, eternal objects, endurance, organism, interfusion.

The first question is, if we get all this from the poets, where do the poets get it? Take *change* and *endurance*, for which Mr. Whitehead is so obliged to Shelley. Shelley, I suspect, got them where everybody else has got them in the end – that is, from Plato.[12] The reality of eternal objects sounds to me much more like Plato than a discovery of Shelley, or all the romantic poets together. I do not deny the possibility that Shelley may have had a fresh intuition of these things, but Plato did get there first. And also it is very difficult to spot these intuitions: Shelley must have had an esthetic intuition that there is no God, and that the Christian religion is an odious lie; for he could hardly have reached such passionate conviction on the subject from mere reasoning.[13] (Of course it is possible that he read Rousseau and Voltaire, or even Godwin.)[14] Even if we gain the doctrine in question from *the poets*, we hardly needed to have gone to the poets for that. And in passing, I wonder whether the concept of *organism* is so fundamental to a philosophy of nature as Mr. Whitehead supposes.[15] We may get a better term some day, or we may even return to Aristotle, who knew as much about what this term represents as anybody.[16]

At the very best, Mr. Whitehead is I think confusing the *persuasive* power of poetry with evidence of truth. He is transferring to poetry, as a scientist, that credulity which previous generations, including some poets, are said to have bestowed upon science.

Professor Whitehead may serve as a warning that a man may be one of the greatest living exponents of formal logic, and yet be quite helpless in a field with which he is not familiar. I should not however have devoted this space merely to the churlish pleasure of attacking a famous man; but because I believe that the theory of poetry implicit in Whitehead's chapter is dangerous, because we could prove by it, choosing our examples judiciously, almost anything we like. I also believe, what is a related point which I cannot deal with here, that Mr. Whitehead errs by his ignorance of theology just as he errs by his not having thought seriously enough about poetry.[17]

Now among those persons who have thought directly about poetry – and indeed some of them are greatly indebted to Mr. Whitehead and Mr. Russell for their logical training – there have arisen lately two interesting views. One is that of Mr. Montgomery Belgion, in one chapter of his recent book *Our Present Philosophy of Life*.[18] His theory is that the *literary* artist – he is not concerned with the other arts – is what he calls an "irresponsible propagandist."[19] That is to say, every writer adopts a view or theory of life; his choice may have been more or less justified or capricious, may be more or less right, may be true or false: it happens to be the view which suits *him*; he makes use of it as material for his literary art. The effect of the work of literary art is always to *persuade* the reader to accept that view or theory. This persuasion is always illicit. That is to say, that the reader is always led to believe something, and that assent is hypnotic – the art of the presentation seduces the reader: even if what he is led to believe is right to believe, the reader has been *mis*led into believing it. This theory is, as you see, rather depressing, and is remotely similar to that of Plato, who ejected the poets from his ideal republic;[20] but it is neither fantastic nor easy to overthrow.

The other theory is that of Mr. I. A. Richards, as expressed particularly in his recent book *Practical Criticism*. Mr. Richards holds that while it is probably necessary for the poet to believe something, in order to write his poetry – although he inclines to think that a further step will be made when the poet believes nothing[21] – the ideal reader will appreciate the poetry in a state of mind which is not belief, but rather a temporary suspension of disbelief. The one critic would say, you see, that you will value Dante more highly if you are a Catholic; or alternatively, that if you are enchanted by the poetry of Dante you will probably become a Catholic. Mr. Richards would say, I think, that the more you know about what Dante believed or more exactly the more you know about the philosophy of life on which Dante's poem is based – leaving out of account the question of what and how Dante himself believed – the better: but that when you are enjoying Dante's poem to the full as poetry, you cannot be said either to believe, or to doubt, or to disbelieve, its scholastic philosophy. So you *ought* to be able to appreciate, as literature, *all* literature, of whatever place, race or time.[22]

These two theories are not so antithetical as they at first seem. Mr. Belgion is more concerned with what actually does happen; he says that, whether you know it or not, you tend to believe, you are *influenced*, by any author whose form of expression you admire. Mr. Richards is less concerned with the actual than with the ideal reader: he says, in effect, this may happen, but in so far as it does happen your reaction is impure; you *ought not* to be affected in this way: it is possible and it is right to enjoy poetry as poetry, and you merely use in the reading the philosophy of the author; just as the author was using, unconsciously, that philosophy in order to write the poetry.

In a note to a recent essay which I have published on Dante, I made a first attempt to criticize both views, and to find some way of mediation between the truth of both.[23] I am now making a fresh start.

First of all no art, and particularly and especially no literary art, can exist in a vacuum. We are, in practice, creatures of divers interests, and in many of our ordinary interests there is no obvious coherence. Read, for instance, the information given by those personages in *Who's Who* who condescend to fill in that space of the form marked *Recreations*. There is no apparent relation, to fabricate a specimen, between breeding prize Persian cats and racing toy yachts. This is one extreme of the scale. At the other end, we do tend, I am sure, to unify our interests. To suppose that anyone likes only the *best* poetry, and that he likes all of the best poetry equally, and that he likes all of the second-best poetry in a second-best liking, and so on until he detests all of the worst poetry equally, is to suppose a monster. I do not suppose that there ever has been, or ever will be, a critic of any art, whose appreciation was a separate faculty, quite judicious and wholly isolated from his other interests and his private passions: if there was, is or will be, he was, is or will be a bore with nothing at all to say. And yet, on the other hand, there is no worse bore, and no more futile critic, then the one who renounces all objective standards in order to recount his own reactions. "A voyage among masterpieces" is I believe the phrase that Anatole France used to describe his own criticism, implying that it was merely an account of his own feelings – yet the phrase itself admits that the masterpieces were there as masterpieces, before the voyage began.[24]

But this apparent paradox – this need of aiming at one thing in order to do another – this apparent gospel of hypocrisy or self-deception, is right, because it is in the nature of the human soul and embodies its need and craving for perfection and unity. We do tend, I think, to organize our tastes in various arts into a whole; we aim in the end at a theory of life, or a view of life, and so far as we are conscious, to terminate our enjoyment of the arts in a philosophy, and our philosophy in a religion – in such a way that the personal to oneself is fused and completed in the impersonal and general, not extinguished, but enriched, expanded, developed, and more itself by becoming more something not itself.

There is, according to my view, not *one*, but a *series*, of appreciators of poetry. One of the errors, I think, of critical theory, is to conceive one hypothetical poet on the one hand, and one hypothetical reader on the other. It is perhaps a less dangerous error than to have no hypotheses at all. My point is that the legitimate motives of the poet, and also the legitimate responses of the reader, vary very widely, but that there is a possible order in the variations. In my series let us put Mr. Belgion at one end of the scale and Mr. Richards at the other. The one extreme is to like poetry merely for what it has to say: that is, to like it merely because it voices our own beliefs or prejudices – which is of course to be quite indifferent to the *poetry* of the poetry. The other extreme is to like the poetry because the poet has manipulated his material into perfect art, which is to be indifferent to the material, and to isolate our enjoyment of poetry from life. The one extreme is not enjoyment of poetry at all, the other is enjoyment of an abstraction which is merely *called* poetry. But between these extremes occurs a continuous range of appreciations, each of which has its limited validity.

The validity of this range of appreciations is confirmed by our examination of the impulses of different poets.[25] We may for convenience contrast three different types. There is the philosophic poet like Lucretius and Dante, who accepts one philosophy of life so to speak in advance, and who constructs his poem on one idea. There is the poet like Shakespeare, or possibly Sophocles, who accepts current ideas and makes use of them, but in whose work the question of Belief is much more baffling and evasive. There is finally another type, of which we might take Goethe as an example, who neither quite accepts a particular view of the whole, nor merely sees views of life to make poetry out of, but who in himself more or less combines the functions of philosopher and poet – or perhaps Blake; poets who have their own ideas and definitely believe them.[26]

Some poets are of so mixed a type that it is impossible to say how far they write their poetry because of what they believe, and how far they believe a thing merely because they see that they can make poetry out of it. And if I am justified in allowing this range of possible motives to the true poet (and an analogous range to the true reader of poetry) then Mr. Belgion's and Mr. Richards's theories must be considerably modified. For the "irresponsible propaganda" is sometimes less irresponsible, and sometimes less propaganda. Lucretius and Dante, for instance, are what Mr. Belgion would call propagandists, certainly, but they are particularly conscious and responsible ones: you have only to read what Dante says in the *Convivio* and in his letter to Can-Grande to understand what his purpose was.[27]

Milton was also a deliberate propagandist; but here we must allow for another difference. The philosophies of Lucretius and Dante, different as they are from each other, are still potent to influence mankind. I cannot imagine any reader today being affected in his theological views by Milton. The reason is, I think, that Lucretius and Dante are each summing up and restating in great poetry two views which are central to the history of the mind of western man; whereas Milton is merely restating in great poetry a view which was very largely his own invention, or his own concoction, and which represents an eccentric heresy revived in his own mind. In Milton it is much easier to separate the greatness of the poetry from the thought, serious as it is, behind that poetry. Milton, therefore, is much more apprehensible from the Richards point of view; because in reading Milton we are I think rapt by the splendid verse without being tempted to believe the philosophy or theology.[28] In considering whether a literary artist is an irresponsible propagandist or not, we have therefore to take into account both varieties of intention, and varieties of effect in time. Milton may, I feel, have had this powerful influence at one time which I feel that Lucretius and Dante can have at any time; but I do not believe that he has it now. And in general, the element of propaganda in the actual effect of any piece of literature upon us will depend either upon the permanence of the doctrine, or upon its nearness to us in time. The effect of a book like *The Way of All Flesh* was, I am sure, for the generation immediately following Butler much what he intended; for the next generation it is not at all the same.[29]

You will infer, perhaps, that we must come to the conclusion that it is impossible to enjoy (or judge) a work of art as such, until sufficient time has elapsed for its doctrines to be quite out of date: so that we merely inspect and accept them, as Mr. Richards would have us do: wait a few hundred years, and we shall know how good any piece of literature is. There are several reasons why this simple solution will not do. One is that when an author is so remote from us, in time or in race, that we know nothing of his material and cannot at all understand his beliefs, we cannot appreciate his work as poetry. To enjoy Homer as poetry, we need a good deal more than Greek vocabulary and Greek accidence and syntax; and the more we saturate ourselves in the life of the ancient Greeks, the more we attempt to recreate imaginatively their world, the better we understand and enjoy the poetry of that world.[30] Another reason is that time, alas, does not necessarily bring detachment. It may merely substitute for a set of prejudices favorable to the poet, another set unfavorable to him. It is interesting to read the comments of Mr. Richards's students, as set forth in *Practical Criticism*, on Donne's great sonnet "At the round world's imagined corners . . ."[31] Some of the misunderstanding is due, I believe, not so much to ignorance of the theology of Donne's time, as to these students' more or less conscious acceptance of another set of beliefs current in our own time.[32]

I have called Lucretius and Dante *responsible propagandists*. But there are some poets whom it is a strain to think of as propagandists at all. Take Shakespeare. He is never, like the former, expounding one definite philosophical system. I am aware that many attempts have been made, and will be made, to expound in clear prose the theory of life which Shakespeare is supposed to have held; and that any number of views of life have been extracted from Shakespeare.[33] I do not say that such attempts are illegitimate or altogether futile; it is a natural tendency to philosophize on Shakespeare just as it is to philosophize on the world itself. Only, the philosophy of Shakespeare is quite a different thing from that of Dante; it really has more in common with, let us say, the philosophy of Beethoven. That is to say, those of us who love Beethoven find in his music something that we call its meaning, though we cannot confine it in words; but it is this meaning which fits it in, somehow, to our whole life; which makes it an emotional exercise and discipline, and not merely an appreciation of virtuosity.[34] Shakespeare does certainly influence us; but as he influences each man according to his own education, temperament and sensibility, and as we have no clue to the relation of his influence upon any one mind with what Shakespeare actually meant, it is almost fantastic to call it propaganda.

When we come to Mr. Whitehead's mentors, Shelley and Wordsworth, the situation is again different. Judging from their effect upon Mr. Whitehead, we should certainly call them irresponsible propagandists. But I suspect that their influence upon such a mind as Mr. Whitehead's is in direct ratio to the vagueness of their ideas, or to the fact that they take certain things for granted, instead of expounding them. The orthodox Christian, for example, is hardly likely to take Dante as proving Christianity; the orthodox materialist is hardly likely to adduce Lucretius as evidence of materialism or atomism. What he will find in Dante or in Lucretius is the *esthetic* sanction: that is, the partial justification of these views of life by the art to which they give rise. And there is no doubt that we are all of us powerfully influenced by the esthetic sanction; and that any way or view of life which gives rise to great art is for us more plausible than one which gives rise to inferior art or to none. And on the other hand I do not believe that a Christian can fully appreciate Buddhist art, or vice versa.[35]

But Mr. Whitehead was not, I suspect, making this use, which I consider legitimate, of the esthetic sanction. You do not get this by going to the poets for maxims or gnomic sayings, or by attributing to them some inspiration as of the Delphic oracle. You can only say: this or that poet has used these ideas to make poetry, and has accordingly shown that these ideas can and do give rise to certain values. These ideas consequently are valid not merely in a theory, but can be integrated into life through art. But in order to do this we are obliged to value first the art of a Shelley or a Wordsworth. How complete, how intelligent, how well understood, is the philosophy used by the poet, how completely does he realize it poetically; where does he get it from, how much of life does it cover? Such questions we must ask first. And what poetry proves about any philosophy is merely its possibility for being lived – for life includes both philosophy and art.

But, we may ask, is the greatness, the comprehensiveness of the philosophy in any actual or theoretical relation to the greatness of the poetry? Actually, we may find a poet giving greater validity to an inferior philosophy, by realizing it more fully and masterfully in literary art, and another employing a better philosophy and realizing it less satisfactorily. Yet we can hardly doubt that the "truest" philosophy is the best material for the greatest poet; so that the poet must be rated in the end both by the philosophy he realizes in poetry and by the fulness and adequacy of the realization. For poetry – here and so far I am in accord with Mr. Richards – is not the assertion that something is true, but the making that truth more fully real to us; it is the creation of a sensuous embodiment.[36] It is the making the Word Flesh, if we remember that for poetry there are various qualities of Word and various qualities of Flesh.[37] Of course, as I said above, for some kinds of poetry it is necessary that the poet himself should believe the philosophy of which he is making use. I do not wish however to overemphasize the importance of the philosophy, or to speak of it as if it was the exclusive material. What we find when we read Lucretius or Dante is that the poet has effected a fusion between that philosophy and his natural feelings, so that the philosophy becomes real, and the feelings become elevated, intensified and dignified.

And we must remember that part of the *use* of poetry for human beings is similar to their use for philosophy. When we study philosophy as a humane discipline we do not do so merely in order to pick out one which we shall adopt as "true," or either to confect a philosophy of our own out of all philosophies. We do so largely for the exercise in assumption or entertaining ideas; for the enlargement and exercise of mind we get by trying to penetrate a man's thought and think it after him, and then passing out of that experience to another. Only by the exercise of understanding without believing, so far as that is possible, can we come in full consciousness to some point where we believe *and* understand. Similarly with the experience of poetry. We aim ideally to come to rest in some poetry which shall realize poetically what we ourselves believe; but we have no contact with poetry unless we can pass in and out freely, among the various worlds of poetic creation. In practice, our literary judgment is always fallible, because we inevitably tend to overestimate a poetry which embodies a view of life which we can understand and which we accept; but we are not really entitled to prize such poetry so highly unless we also make the effort to enter those worlds of poetry in which we are alien. Poetry cannot prove that anything is *true*; it can only create a variety of wholes composed of intellectual and emotional constituents, justifying the emotion by the thought and the thought by the emotion: it proves successively, or fails to prove, that certain worlds of thought and feeling are *possible*. It provides intellectual sanction for feeling, and esthetic sanction for thought.[38]

NOTES

1. In early Dec 1929, TSE told Herbert Read that he had recently lectured "at the Children's Theatre in Endell Street on Whitehead's appreciation of poetry for the benefit of the repair of the organ in St. George's Bloomsbury" (*L4* 692). TSE placed the article, originally titled "Poetry and Philosophy," with the *Bookman* (New York) through the literary agent David Higham, informing him on 28 Nov 1929 that "I have no intention of publishing it in this country – and that therefore any American review that took it would be having practically the first rights" (*L4* 683). After purchasing the rights, Seward Collins of the *Bookman* wrote on 3 Jan 1930 to ask TSE if he minded "our change of the title from 'Poetry and Philosophy' to 'Poetry and Propaganda'? It seemed to us a little more descriptive of the essay." When proof arrived with the proposed title, TSE wrote in the margin, "Change of title by the Editor?"

2. Whitehead, *Science and the Modern World* (London: Macmillan, 1925). For TSE's unpublished review of *Science and the Modern World*, see "The Return of Foxy Grandpa" (1927) (3.261).

3. Wordsworth, "Elegiac Stanzas, Suggested by a Picture of Peele Castle, in a Storm, Painted by Sir George Beaumont" (1807), *Wordsworth: Poetical Works with Introductions and Notes*, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, revised by Ernest de Selincourt (Oxford UP, 1904), 452.

4. Whitehead remarks: "Tennyson is the mouthpiece of the attempts of the waning romantic movement in the second quarter of the nineteenth century to come to terms with science" (112), adding that "the importance of Tennyson's poem [*In Memoriam*] lies in the fact that it exactly expressed the character of its period" (119).

5. Whitehead does not discuss either Browning or Swinburne.

6. The "mechanism of science" in the nineteenth century was superseded by the models of atomic theory propounded by the physicists Einstein and Ernest Rutherford (1871-1935).

7. In early Dec 1929, TSE wrote to Herbert Read to say that after his lecture "Miss Professor Stebbing of Bedford College said she agreed with me. But a furious young man said was I unaware that the mechanistic explanation of life was the only one accepted by medical students? Christianity, said he, is merely a particular and insignificant form of vitalism, and vitalism is absurd" (*L4* 692).

8. In his 1933 Page-Barbour lectures, TSE remarks that "The work of the late Thomas Hardy represents an interesting example of a powerful personality uncurbed by any institutional attachment or by submission to any objective beliefs" (*ASG* 54).

9. In "Rhyme and Reason: The Poetry of John Donne" (1930), TSE defines a kind of philosophical poet as one who "has written a poem to express in verse a particular theory of the universe which he has taken from some philosopher – Lucretius wrote his poem [*De rerum natura*] to expound the philosophy of Epicurus . . . in verse" (4.59).

10. TSE wrote to the Archbishop of York on 19 Dec 1930: "I know that Eddington is a Christian, but I object to his loading his dice so heavily on behalf of the Society of Friends," and on 5 Apr 1931 TSE complained to Lord Halifax about the "doctrine-less religiosity of Eddington and Jeans" (*L5* 533). Eddington came from a traditional Quaker family and was a member of the Society of Friends throughout his life.

11. In "Dante" (1929), TSE observes of the *Vita nuova*: "There is also a practical sense of realities behind it, which is antiromantic: not to expect more from *life* than it can give or more from *human* beings than they can give; to look to *death* for what life cannot give" (3.733).

12. Whitehead comments: "Shelley brings vividly before us the elusiveness of the eternal objects of sense as they haunt the change which infects underlying organisms" (127). After quoting the opening stanza of "Mont Blanc" (1817) beginning, "The everlasting universe of Things / Flows through the mind," Whitehead observes: "Shelley has written these lines with explicit reference to some form of idealism, Kantian or Berkeleyan or Platonic" (124).

On 20 May 1927, in a letter to J. M. Robertson, TSE was highly critical of Shelley: "I will admit in advance to certain prejudices against the author who seems to me one of the dullest of the Great English Poets; and my prejudices have only been strengthened recently by reading Professor Whitehead's praise of that author in his *Science and the Modern World*. If Shelley is science, then science is one of my lost illusions" (*L3* 523).

13. Shelley was expelled from Oxford University for refusing to disavow authorship of a pamphlet titled *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811) and signed a hotel register on 23 July 1816 in Greek as "a lover of mankind, democrat and atheist," quoted in Gavin de Beer, "An 'Atheist' in the Alps," *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin*, 9 (1958), 1.

14. In his Harvard lecture on "Shelley and Keats" (1933), TSE expressed his admiration for the Rousseau passage in *The Triumph of Life* (1824), which he called Shelley's "greatest though unfinished poem" (Voltaire appeared with Rousseau in a cancelled passage), but TSE bemoans the fact that Shelley "never quite escaped from the tutelage of Godwin, even when he saw through the humbug as a man" (4.643). Shelley had a complex relationship with his father-in-law, the philosopher and novelist William Godwin (1756-1836), coupling Godwin's denunciation of marriage in *An Enquiry concerning Political Justice* (1793) with atheism. In his "Syllabus of a Course of Six Lectures on Modern French Literature" (1916), TSE recommended H. N. Brailsford's *Shelley, Godwin and their Circle* (1913) (1.476).

15. In *Science and the Modern World*, Whitehead proposes to go beyond realism and idealism: "My point is that a further stage of provisional realism is required in which the scientific scheme is recast, and founded upon the ultimate concept of *organism*" (93). Whitehead developed his "philosophy of organism" in his 1927-28 Gifford Lectures at Edinburgh University titled *Process and Reality*.

16. Aristotle defined an organism as a unity and not a divided being. "If, then, we have to give a general formula applicable to all kinds of soul, we must describe it as the first grade of actuality of a natural organized body. That is why we can wholly dismiss as unnecessary the question whether the soul and the body are one: it is as meaningless as to ask whether the wax and the shape given to it by the stamp are one, or generally the matter of a thing and that of which it is the matter. Unity has many senses (as many as 'is' has), but the most proper and fundamental sense of both is the relation of an actuality to that of which it is the actuality." *De anima*, Book II, Part I. TSE wrote "Soul + body are a unity" beside this passage in the margin of his copy of *Source Book in Ancient Philosophy* (1907) now held in King's.

17. TSE offers his critique of "Dr. Whitehead's rehabilitation of religion" in "The Return of Foxy Grandpa" (3.261).

18. *Our Present Philosophy of Life* (London: Faber, 1929). On 30 Oct 1929, TSE told the Rev. E. G. Selwyn that *Our Present Philosophy of Life* was "first submitted to me, and was published on my strong recommendation" (*L4* 670). TSE's book report for Faber (dated 21 July 1929) comments: "The author analyses painstakingly the philosophy expressed and implicit in the work of four men: Bernard Shaw, André Gide, Freud and Bertrand Russell. . . . Its conclusions are unfavourable to all the authors mentioned: he finds that they all exploit the same or allied fallacies and heresies, and that they all approve three cults: that of 'personality,' that of 'experience,' and that of 'irresponsibility.' The criticism is entirely destructive, but it is a useful kind of destruction. I found myself in agreement with most of it." In the *Criterion* for July 1930, Ramon Fernandez praised *Our Present Philosophy of Life* as "a brilliant specimen of that philosophical criticism which I have been exploring for some years" (760).

TSE became acquainted with the journalist and author Montgomery Belgion (1892-1973) in 1927 following Belgion's translation of Fernandez's *Messages* (containing an essay on TSE).

19. "The Irresponsible Propagandist" is the title of Belgion's second chapter.

20. In Book X of *The Republic*, Plato argues that poets should be excluded from his ideal republic on the grounds that "all poetical imitations are ruinous to the understanding of the hearers" (trans. B. Jowett, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1888), 307.

21. In *Science and Poetry*, Richards praises TSE's *The Waste Land* for "effecting a complete severance between his poetry and *all* beliefs" (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1926, 64-65n). However, in "Dante" (1929), TSE claimed that this statement "is to me incomprehensible" (3.378). In "What Is Belief?," exasperated by what he saw as TSE's misrepresentation of his theory of "belief," Richards concluded forthrightly: "I suggest, then, that there may be reasonable grounds for not wishing to Believe anything. . . . I wish only to discourage the assumption that the type of mind which needs Belief is necessarily the finer" (*Nation*, 7, 18 July 1934), 74.

22. Richards asserts: "It is better to say that the question of belief or disbelief, in the intellectual sense, never arises when we are reading well" (*Practical Criticism*, London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1929), 277.

23. TSE's "Note to Chapter II" in "Dante" (1929) concludes tentatively "I cannot, in practice, wholly separate my poetic appreciation from my personal beliefs. . . . Actually, one probably has more pleasure in the poetry when one shares the beliefs of the poet" (3.729-30).

24. Anatole France observed: "Le bon critique est celui qui raconte les aventures de son âme au milieu des chefs-d'œuvre" [A good critic is one who narrates the adventures of his mind among masterpieces]. "À Monsieur Adrien Hébrard, sénateur, directeur du *Temps*," *La Vie littéraire* (Paris: Calmann Lévy, 1921), 3.

25. TSE takes up the importance of "impulses" in Richards's emotive theory of poetry. Richards asserts: "Impulses which commonly interfere with one another and are conflicting, independent, and mutually distractive, in him [the poet] combine into a stable poise." *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1926), 101.

26. In his contemporary BBC broadcast "Rhyme and Reason: The Poetry of John Donne," TSE says that George Santayana's Harvard lectures on Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe – collected as *Three Philosophical Poets* (1910) – "fixed for us the meaning of 'philosophical poetry'" (4.58-59).

27. Dante abandoned the treatise the *Convivio* [*"The Banquet"*] (ca. 1304-07) before beginning the *Commedia*. TSE owned a 1912 Temple Classics edition of *The Convivio of Dante Alighieri*. In *Epistola* X (numbered XIII in some editions) (1314-17 or 1319-20), addressed to his patron Cangrande della Scala, Dante explains that the *Commedia* works on several levels: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical.

28. In his 1933 Page-Barbour lectures, TSE observes: "It is impossible to separate the 'poetry' in *Paradise Lost* from the peculiar doctrines that it enshrines . . . but we can certainly enjoy the poetry and yet be fully aware of the intellectual and moral aberrations of the author" (*ASG* 32-33), and in "Milton" (1936), TSE said of *Paradise Lost*: "So far as I perceive anything, it is a glimpse of a theology that I find in large part repellent, expressed through a mythology which would have been better left in the Book of *Genesis*, upon which Milton has not improved. There seems to me to be a division, in Milton, between the philosopher or theologian and the poet."

29. On 1 Apr 1918, TSE wrote to Eleanor Hinkley that Samuel Butler's *The Way of All Flesh* (1903) "was written by a man who was not an artist and had no sense of style; it is too long, and the beginning of the book and the adventures of Ernest are dull, but the character of Christina is amazing. Butler (read his Notebooks) just happened to know this phase of English life

particularly well" (*L1* 259). TSE included the novel on his "Syllabus for a Tutorial Class in Modern English Literature" (1917) (1.590).

30. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), TSE made the claim that the mind of Europe "does not superannuate either Shakespeare, or Homer" (2.107). On 2 June 1930, however, TSE confessed to Paul Elmer More: "I have always *enjoyed* Virgil far more than Homer."

31. *Read*: "At the round earth's imagined corners, blow"

32. The first "protocol" Richards quotes in response to Donne's sonnet on the Day of Judgment (all poems were circulated to Cambridge students without authorship, titles, or dates of composition) declares: "I confess immediately that I can't make out what all the shouting is about" (*Practical Criticism*, 43). Richards remarks on the "surprising unfamiliarity with the elements of the Christian religion" (44) and "anti-religious prejudice" (45) exhibited by several of the responses, later observing that "many who try to read religious poetry find themselves strongly invited to the beliefs presented, and that doctrinal dissent is a very serious obstacle to their reading" (273). Richards showed his student protocols to TSE in 1928 before the publication of *Practical Criticism* and solicited TSE's anonymous responses to poems by Whitman, Longfellow and others. In "The Devotional Poets of the Seventeenth Century" (1930), TSE quotes Donne's sonnet entire "to show what *his* best religious poetry was like" (4.74).

33. In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (1927), TSE's satirized several "up-to-date" Shakespeares for displaying a "philosophy of life" extracted from the plays, including Lytton Strachey's "fatigued Shakespeare, a retired Anglo-Indian," Middleton Murry's "messianic Shakespeare, bringing a new philosophy and a new system of yoga" and Wyndham Lewis's "ferocious Shakespeare, a furious Samson . . . a Shakespeare who is a *positive* nihilist, an intellectual force *willing* destruction" (3.245, 251).

34. On 15 Jan 1927, on the centenary of Beethoven's death, TSE told Frederick Sard: "I should hesitate . . . to commit myself to any expression of criticism of so great a musician as Beethoven" (*L3* 374). In a letter to Stephen Spender dated 28 Mar 1931, TSE remarked: "I have the A minor quartet on the gramophone, and find it quite inexhaustible to study. There is a sort of heavenly or at least more than human gaiety about some of his later things which one imagines might come to oneself as the fruit of reconciliation and relief after immense suffering; I should like to get something of that into verse once before I die" (*L5* 529).

35. TSE is responding to Richards's claim in *Practical Criticism*: "Lucretius and Virgil, Euripides and Aeschylus, we currently assume, are equally accessible, given the necessary scholarship to a Roman Catholic, to a Buddhist and to a confirmed sceptic" (271). On 9 Aug 1930, TSE wrote to Richards: "I shall be very much interested in any results of your study of Chinese abstractions. I dare say it is likely to be more profitable than my attempt, so many years ago, at studying Indian metaphysics in Sanskrit. The conclusion I came to then (after it is true only a couple of years' struggle with the language) was that it seemed impossible to be on both sides of the looking-glass at once. . . . In other words, I thought that the only way I could ever come to understand Indian thought would be to erase not only my own education in European philosophy, but the traditions and mental habits of Europe for two thousand years" (*L5* 284-85).

36. TSE gestures here towards Richards's controversial "pseudo-statement" (first formulated in the *Criterion* for July 1925) used to describe the emotive language of poetry: "The acceptance

which a pseudo-statement receives is entirely governed by its effects upon our feelings and attitudes . . . A pseudo-statement is 'true' if it suits and serves some attitude or links together attitudes which on other grounds are desirable" (*Science and Poetry*, 58-59).

37. John 1:14: "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

38. Responding to I. A. Richards's letter saying that he had read this *Bookman* article, TSE replied on 12 May 1930: "My *Bookman* paper was a poor attempt, a paper written in a hurry to fulfil a promise connected with the collection of funds for repairing the organ of a Bloomsbury church: so don't take it seriously" (*L5* 169). On 13 July, Richards wrote again to say that he was planning "to do an article in semi-controversy for the *Bookman* on Belief – if you don't raise an objection. There are several outstanding misunderstandings standing between us in print which I would like to try to clear up" (*Selected Letters of I. A. Richards*, ed. John Constable, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990, 56). Nothing came of Richards's proposal. However, on 4 Nov 1935, Richards once again attempted to explain to TSE the theory of poetry put forward in his 1925 *Criterion* article: "The senses of *true* and *false* for statements & Pseudo-Statements are, I hold, so different that they cannot fairly be talked of with the same terms. . . . Or, Rather, with Pseudo-Statements, the process of finding out is a process of experimental growth and is the same as acceptance or rejection, as the case may be" (*Selected Letters of I. A. Richards*, 96).

Religion without Humanism[1]

I must rely, in these few pages, upon a brief summary of the limitations within which I believe humanism must work, which I published in the *Hound and Horn*, June, 1929.[2] In that paper I stated my belief that humanism is in the end futile without religion. Here I wish to put forward briefly a view which seems to me equally important, the counterpart of the other, and one which ought to be more welcome to humanists. Having called attention to what I believe to be a danger, I am bound to call attention to the danger of the other extreme: the danger, a very real one, of *religion without humanism*.

I believe that the sceptic, even the pyrrhonist, but particularly the humanist-sceptic, is a very useful ingredient in a world which is no better than it is.[3] In saying this I do not think that I am committing myself to any theological heresy. The ideal world would be the ideal Church. But very little knowledge of human nature is needed to convince us that hierarchy is liable to corruption, and certainly to stupidity; that religious belief, when unquestioned and uncriticised, is liable to degeneration into superstition; that the human mind is much lazier than the human body; and that the communion of saints in Tibet is of a very low order.[4] If we cannot rely, and it seems that we can never rely, upon adequate criticism from within, it is better that there should be criticism from without. But here I wish to make a capital distinction: criticism, infidelity and agnosticism must, to be of value, be *original* and not inherited. Orthodoxy must be traditional, heterodoxy must be original. The attitude of Voltaire has value, because of its place in time; the attitude of Renan has value, in its historical perspective; Anatole France I can only consider as a man who came at the most unfortunate date for his own reputation – too late to be a great sceptic, and too soon to be a great sceptic. There must be more orthodoxy before there can be another Voltaire. And precisely I fear lest humanism should make a tradition of dissent and agnosticism, and so cut itself off from the sphere of influence in which it is most needed.

For there is no doubt in my mind that contemporary religious institutions are in danger from themselves; that they have with few exceptions lost the "intellectual," except that pernicious kind of intellectual who adopts dogma merely because doubt is out of date.[5] Nowhere is this more obvious than in America. All the religious forms which have some ancestry, and many which have none, flourish there; but among persons whom I have known, there is hardly one who had any connection (not to say any conviction) with any of them.

But America is not isolated in this respect; it merely shows us under a magnifying glass what occurs everywhere. The two dangers to which religion is exposed are apparent everywhere and they are both cases for which "humanism" or "culture" might be called in: *petrified ecclesiasticism*, and *modernism*.[6]

The great merit of the Catholic Church, from the worldly point of view, is its catholicity. That is to say, it is obvious that every religion is effectively limited by the racial characters of the people who practise it, and that a strictly racial or national religion is certain to hold many irrelevances and impurities, from lack of an outside standard of criticism. When the Catholic Faith really is catholic, the aberrations of one race will be corrected by those of another. But it is obviously very difficult even for the Roman Church, nowadays, to be truly catholic. The embarrassment of temporal powers, the virulence of racial and national enthusiasms, are enormous centrifugal forces. The great majority of English speaking people, or at least the vast majority of persons of British descent; half of France, half of Germany, the whole of Scandinavia, are outside of the Roman communion: that is to say, the Roman Church has lost some organic parts of the body of modern civilisation. It is a recognition of this fact which makes some persons of British extraction hesitate to embrace the Roman communion; and which makes them feel that those of their race who have embraced it have done so only by the surrender of some essential part of their inheritance and by cutting themselves off from their family.

But if one feels that the culture of the Roman Catholic Church to-day is imperfect – and also in danger of splitting up into various local and national bigotries and political factions which will retain only the name and the observances of Catholicism – one cannot get any satisfaction from what happens outside of that church either. The Roman Church in America has little contact with some of the most valuable elements in American culture; it not only lacks humanism, but is in danger of adding vulgarity. In England it is negligible. But both in England and America, Protestantism is in still worse case. It can be, and usually is, equally vulgar; it can be equally narrow and bigoted; with the alternative that when it is not narrow and bigoted it is liberal, sloppy, hypocritical and humanitarian. The Roman Church is dangerous in one direction; the Protestant Churches are dangerous in two directions.

I have already said what I think of humanism without religion; I respect it, but believe it to be sterile.[7] Religion without humanism produces the vulgarities and the political compromises of Roman Catholicism; the vulgarities and the fanaticism of Tennessee; it produces Mrs. MacPherson; and it produces liberal uplift and it produces the Bishop of Birmingham.[8] For it is the chief point of this short paper, that religion without humanism produces the opposite and conflicting types of religious bigotry (liberalism in religion is a form of bigotry). We have Cardinal O'Connell; the late W. J. Bryan; and we have the cultivated divines of the most radical wing of Unitarianism.[9] The sum of *disjecta membra* is completed by the humanists.[10]

I have examined several popular theological works by Anglican clergy of the liberal school.[11]* It would I am sure be difficult to convince any of these worthy people that they were humanitarian without being humanist. Humanitarians (and among them we must include anti-humanitarians like Dean Inge, a sentimentalist *à rebours*)[12] are often highly cultivated people who have read many books; some of them, in England at least, can read Latin and Greek; the Bishop of Birmingham took honours in mathematics.[13] Yet in surrendering dogmatic faith they are at the same time surrendering their humanism. It is from such people that we hear most about "science and religion"; it is such people who pay, and lead the flock to pay, that exaggerated devotion to "science" which the true humanist deplores.[14]

It is curious that whilst on the one hand the liberal theologian tends to pay homage to an illusory divinity called "science" the advanced scientist tends to pay homage to an equally vague "religion." People seem to suppose that by science yielding points to religion, and religion yielding points to science, we shall quite soon arrive at a position of comfortable equilibrium. What will be "real" will be the technical progress of science, and the material organization of the churches: we shall still have professors of physics and we shall still have clergy, and nobody will lose his job. Scientists and clergy alike seem to speak nowadays as if they were in terror of the spectre of unemployment: "I will not make exaggerated claims," they both seem to say, "lest I may be discovered to be superfluous."

But this apparent approximation of science and religion, which we discover in such theological works as those I have mentioned, and in such popular scientific works as those of Whitehead and Eddington, is a delusion.[15] The meeting is a mere cancellation to zero. Nothing positive is attained by reciprocal surrender. The theologian says "of course dogma is not truth," and the scientist says, "of course science is not truth." Every one is happy together; and possibly both parties turn to *poetry* (about which neither scientist nor theologian knows anything) and say "*there* is truth, in the inspiration of the poet."[16] The poet himself, who perhaps knows more about his own inspiration than a psycho-analyst does, is not allowed to reply that poetry is poetry, and not science or religion – unless he or some of his mistaken friends produce a theory that Poetry is Pure Poetry, Pure Poetry turning out to be something else than poetry and thereby securing respect.[17]

Both parties, the liberal theologian and the scientist, are deficient in humanism. But what is more serious, to my mind, is that the humanist is deficient in humanism too, and must take his responsibility with the others. What happens, in the general confusion, is not only that each party abdicates his proper part, but that he interferes with the proper part of the others. The theologian is terrified of science, and the scientist is becoming terrified of religion; whilst the humanist, endeavouring to pay proper, but not excessive due to both, reels from side to side. And the world reels with him.

On the following point I speak with diffidence, recognising my lack of qualification where qualification is severe and exact. Humanism has much to say of Discipline and Order and Control and I have parroted these terms myself.[18] I found no discipline in humanism; only a little intellectual discipline from a little study of philosophy. But the difficult discipline is the discipline and training of emotion; this the modern world has great need of; so great need that it hardly understands what the word means; and this I have found is only attainable through dogmatic religion. I do not say that dogmatic religion is justified because it supplies this need – that is just the psychologism and the anthropocentrism that I wish to avoid – but merely state my belief that in no other way can the need be supplied. There is much chatter about mysticism: for the modern world the word means some spattering indulgence of emotion, instead of the most terrible concentration and askesis.[19] But it takes perhaps a lifetime merely to realise that men like the forest sages, and the desert sages, and finally the Victorines and John of the Cross and (in his fashion) Ignatius really *mean what they say*. Only those have the right to talk of discipline who have looked into the Abyss. The need of the modern world is the discipline and training of the emotions; which neither the intellectual training of philosophy or science, nor the wisdom of humanism, nor the negative instruction of psychology can give.

In short, we can use the term Humanism in two ways. In the narrower sense, which tends always under emphasis to become narrower still, it is an important part in a larger whole; and humanists, by offering this part as a substitute for the whole, are lessening, instead of increasing, its importance; they offer an excuse to the modern theologian and the modern scientist (only too ready to grasp it) for *not* being humanistic themselves, and for leaving humanism to its own specialists. Humanism can offer neither the intellectual discipline of philosophy or of science (two different disciplines), nor the emotional discipline of religion. On the other hand, these other activities depend upon humanism to preserve their sanity. Without it, religion tends to become either a sentimental tune, or an emotional debauch;[20] or in theology, a skeleton dance of fleshless dogmas,[21] or in ecclesiasticism, a soulless political club. Without it, science can be merely a process of technical research, bursting out from time to time, and especially in our time, into sentimental monstrosities like the Life Force, or Professor Whitehead's God.[22]

But in the full and complete sense of the word, Humanism is something quite different from a part trying to pretend to be a whole, and something quite different from a "parasite" of religion.[23] It can only be quite actual in the full realisation and balance of the disciplined intellectual and emotional life of man. For, as I have said, without humanism both religion and science tend to become other than themselves, and without religion and science – without emotional and intellectual discipline – humanism tends to shrink into an atrophied caricature of itself. It is the spirit of humanism which has operated to reconcile the mystic and the ecclesiastic in one church; having done this in the past, humanism should not set itself up now as another sect, but strive to continue and enlarge its task, labouring to reconcile and unite all the parts into a whole. It is the humanist who could point out to the theologian the absurdities of his repudiation, acceptance, or exploitation of "science," and to the scientist the absurdities of his repudiation, acceptance, or exploitation of religion. For when I say "reconcile," I mean something very different from the dangerous and essentially anti-humanistic adventures of the Bishop of Birmingham or Professor Whitehead. And let us leave Einstein alone, who has his own business to attend to.[24]

As I believe I am writing chiefly for those who know or think they know, what "humanism" means, I have not in this paper attempted any definition of it. I take it that the reader thinks he knows what it means, and that he will understand that I am putting before him the difference between what I think he thinks it means and what I think I think it means.

I have just one note to add, which is the preface to an extensive sequel. I believe that at the present time the emblem of the unification of the world and the problem of the unification of the individual, are in the end one and the same problem; and that the solution of one is the solution of the other. Analytical psychology (even if accepted far more enthusiastically than I can accept it) can do little except produce monsters;[25] for it is attempting to produce unified individuals in a world without unity; the social, political, and economic sciences can do little, for they are attempting to produce the great society with an aggregation of human beings who are not units but merely bundles of incoherent impulses and beliefs. The problem of nationalism and the problem of dissociated personalities may turn out to be the same. The relevance of this paragraph to what precedes it will, I hope, appear upon examination.[26]

NOTES

1. *Humanism and America: Essays on the Outlook of Modern Civilisation*, ed. Norman Foerster (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1930). Pp. xvii + 294; 105-12.

On 22 Apr 1929, TSE informed Foerster that he would "be delighted to contribute to your symposium," offering to write on the topic "Humanism *in* Religion," adding: "I mean that it would amuse me to show the other face of my own theory – insist upon the danger of *religion without* humanism; having already written about humanism without religion" (*L4* 483). On 3 Aug, TSE informed Paul Elmer More that "I have been struggling to write an essay for Foerster, but I find it is a blind alley. I feel that I have said all that I have to say about Humanism" (*L4* 567). TSE sent the essay to Foerster on 12 Aug, apologizing for its lateness and brevity.

On 31 Jan 1930, TSE thanked the publishers for receipt of the proofs saying that he had read *Humanism and America* "with great interest," adding: "It seems to me that Mr. Foerster has managed his task with very great ability and it is a book which you must be proud to publish" (*L5* 74). The volume was published in New York on 21 Feb and was reviewed favorably by P. S. Richards in the *Criterion*, 9 (July 1930), 744-47: "If it be true, as Mr. Foerster says, that America tends to set the pattern for the twentieth century, the new humanism is the most encouraging feature in the design" (745).

2. In fact, TSE's "Second Thoughts about Humanism" was published in the July 1929 issue of *Hound and Horn*; although it was also published in the June/Aug issue of *New Adelphi*. (3.614)

3. Pyrrhonism (OED): "A system of skeptical philosophy originally expounded by Pyrrho of Elis; the doctrine of the impossibility of attaining certainty of knowledge; absolute or universal skepticism."

4. TSE maintained a long-standing interest in Tibetan Buddhism. On 28 Nov 1939, he thanked Marco Pallis for sending him his travel book *Peaks and Lamas* (1939), remarking that Tibet "is a country and civilisation which has always attracted me very strongly."

5. On 3 Aug 1929, TSE had written to More to say: "What I should like to see is the creation of a new type of intellectual, combining the intellectual and the devotional" (*L4* 567).

6. Modernism (OED): "A tendency or movement towards modifying traditional beliefs and doctrines in accordance with modern ideas and scholarship; *spec.* a movement of this kind in the Roman Catholic Church around the beginning of the 20th cent."

7. In "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (1928), TSE states that "if you find examples of humanism which are anti-religious, or at least in opposition to the religious faith of the place and time, then such humanism is purely destructive" (3.457).

8. Dr. Ernest Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham since 1924, an Anglican modernist and an outspoken opponent of Anglo-Catholicism, was attacked by TSE in "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry" (1928) (3.403). TSE discusses Mrs. MacPherson and the fundamentalist nature of religious belief in "the mountains of Tennessee" in "Second Thoughts about Humanism" (3.616).

9. Cardinal William Henry O'Connell (1859-1944), since 1907 Archbishop of Boston.

10. *disjecta membra* (OED): "scattered remains"

11*. TSE's note: "E.g., *Should Such a Faith Offend?*, by the Bishop of Birmingham; *I Believe in God*, by Maude Royden; *The Impatience of a Parson*, by H. R. L. Sheppard." *Should Such a Faith Offend?* (1927); *I Believe in God* (1927); *The Impatience of a Parson* (1927).

12. *Trans*: "against the grain"; TSE was critical of Dean Inge, Dean of St Paul's, in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Apr 1924 for the "violent and unmeasured statements on literary matters" expressed in his columns for the *Evening Standard* (2.523).

13. Ernest Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham, took a first class in the Mathematical Tripos at Cambridge in 1897.

14. Louis Trenchard More's "The Pretensions of Science," the first essay in *Humanism and America*, offers a humanist critique of science, written from the point of view of a professor of physics, concluding: "That the scientific method, as evolved from physics and chemistry, is not applicable to the problems of life has been the settled conviction of virtually all the investigators in those sciences" (17).

15. Although TSE told Marguerite Caetani on 15 Nov 1930 that Whitehead's *Science and the Modern World* "is a very brilliant piece of work," he had been critical of Whitehead's metaphysics in the unpublished review "The Return of Foxy Grandpa" (1927) (3.261). On 28 Nov 1930, TSE described Eddington to the Archbishop of York as "well-meaning but dangerous" (*L5* 413), and on 5 Apr 31, he warned Lord Halifax against the "doctrine-less religiosity of Eddington and Jeans" (*L5* 533).

16. TSE paraphrases the argument expressed in I. A. Richards's *Science and Poetry* (1925).

17. TSE alludes to Henri Brémond's discussion of the nature of pure poetry in *La Poésie pure* (1926).

18. In "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt," TSE complains that "What Mr. Babbitt, on one side, seems to me to be trying to do is to make humanism – his own form of humanism – work without religion. For otherwise, I cannot see the significance of his doctrine of self-control" (3.457).

19. In "Political Theorists" (1927), TSE said that the volume *Coal* deserves "the attention of people who believe in the spiritual askesis and the discipline and development of the soul" (3.140-41).

20. TSE uses the phrase "emotional debauch" in relation to Elizabethan bombast in his introduction to *Seneca his Tenne tragedies* (3.223).

21. An echo of F. H. Bradley's "unearthly ballet of bloodless categories," *The Principles of Logic* (London: Kegan, Paul and Trench, 1883), 533.

22. In "Mr. Robertson and Mr. Shaw" (1926), TSE remarks that "the potent ju-ju of [Shaw's] Life Force is a gross superstition" (2.781); in a 1927 unpublished review, TSE says that Whitehead's God "assumes that 'science' (a fiction) is in conflict with God (another fiction), and he proceeds to show that science is far from being hostile to God, that on the contrary it requires Him, as the principle of Order" (3.263); and in "Mr. P. E. More's Essays," TSE concurs with More's critique, which "asserts the uselessness of Professor Whitehead's God in religion" (3.263, 3.586).

23. In "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt," TSE concludes that "humanism is, I think, merely the state of mind of a few persons in a few places at a few times. To exist at all; it is dependent upon some other attitude, for it is essentially critical – I would even say parasitical" (3.455).

24. In "An Emotional Unity" (1928), TSE remarks: "We have a different attitude towards science – we have had Einstein and Whitehead – and a new attitude towards religion" (3.338).

25. Jung's *Two Essays on Analytical Psychology* (1917; 1928) and *Contributions to Analytical Psychology* (1928) were reviewed by Alan Porter in the *Criterion* for July 1929 (732-35). L. T. More's essay in *Humanism and America* dismissed "the pseudo-sciences of psychology and sociology" (4).

26. On 5 Apr 1930, TSE apologized to More for his chapter, which he claimed was "written hastily and under difficulties: I was unable to revise it, and fear [it] looks rather frivolous," before going on to explain: "I find the book better than it seemed to me on reading the proof. . . . My only fear is lest Humanism may become a popular parlour game – 'Are you a humanist?' – whereas I should like to internationalise it, and bring the best minds of each country to bear on common problems – Foerster's book is too local – one should at this point try to open more communications instead of closing them up by establishing creeds and party professions – some of the men are almost as dogmatic as I. A. Richards" (*L5* 135-36).

Thinking in Verse: A Survey of Early Seventeenth-Century Poetry[1]

The Listener, 3 (12 Mar 1930) 441-43

[In these six talks I shall be dealing with a number of poets who have some very definite peculiarities in common, to such an extent that they are known generally as "the metaphysical poets." And finally I shall have to indicate the transition, less abrupt and more interesting than is generally thought, from this type of poetry to what is called the poetry of "the Augustan Age," which begins with Dryden. For this reason I cannot merely take the poets one by one, as separate individuals; and I want to employ them also as an introduction, from the side of literature, to what is one of the most remarkable of all periods of European history.

My own initiation into the subject was almost the reverse of my present method. Many years ago I began reading Donne and enjoying his poetry because of its relation to that of the Elizabethan dramatists.[2] I then was curious to read such poets as Herbert, Crashaw and Marvell, and acquired a taste for the poetry of the period. And from that one begins to see the poetry as a manifestation of the seventeenth-century mind; and becoming interested in that mind, is impelled to study the age itself.

Now,] The first thing that strikes us about the poetry of the first half of the century, say, from the accession of James to the death of Charles I, is its great difference in form and content from that of the Elizabethan period.[3] Some of our greatest plays were written during the reign of James I; yet towards the end of his reign a weakening of dramatic inspiration becomes evident. The causes of such changes are always in the end obscure. But the point is that during the reign of Elizabeth the finest poetry that was written was written in plays. For the most part, the other poetry is in comparison thin, artificial and immature. The very best of Shakespeare's sonnets are the great exception; and here and there in the innumerable other sonnets of the time occurs a line or two of deeper feeling than usual. *The Faerie Queene* is a great poem, and Spenser's technical accomplishment is beyond praise; yet with all Spenser's gifts we cannot discharge him of a certain insipidity throughout.[4] Now and then there is fine poetry in the verse translations of the period; and Marlowe's "Hero and Leander" is a magnificent poem.[5]

And the reader who is saturated in the period can read with enjoyment some of Chapman's occasional poems, and parts of "Polyolbion," etc.[6] But on the whole I do not think it is too sweeping a generalisation to say that the profoundest thought and feeling of the age went into its dramatic blank verse, and it is from this, rather than from the Elizabethan lyric, which was genuinely a song, that the most interesting of the poetry we are to discuss derives. One of the most obvious parallels in thoughtfulness and richness of feeling is George Chapman, and Chapman, a true Elizabethan, is at his best in his drama, not in his other verse, interesting as it is. Mr. Herbert Grierson finds an anticipation of the thought-loaded verse of Donne in such lines of Chapman as this fragment of a monologue from the play *Bussy d'Ambois*:[7]

> That in this one thing all the discipline
> Of manners and of manhood is contained;
> A man to join himself with the Universe
> In his main sway, and make in all things fit
> One with the All, and go on, round as it;
> Not plucking from the whole his wretched part,
> And into straits, or into nought revert,
> Wishing the complete Universe might be
> Subject to such a rag of it as he;
> But to consider great Necessity,
> All things as well refract as voluntary
> Reduceth to the prime celestial cause,
> Which he that yields to with a man's applause,
> And cheek by cheek goes, crossing it no breath,
> But like God's image, follows to the death,
> That man is truly wise. . . .[8]

I agree, in so far as it is a characteristic of the poets I shall discuss, that they *think* in verse, rather than *sing* in verse; that this is a good specimen of what preceded "metaphysical poetry." But it is didactic, expressing the conventional stoical philosophy of the time; and my seventeenth-century poets are not philosophers in this way.[9] How they were, we shall see. Meanwhile, it is as well to keep such lines in mind for comparison. But it is not only in passages like this that the Elizabethans in their drama are forerunners of the Jacobean and Caroline poets in their lyrical verse. To be more convincing, I will take two more passages of Elizabethan dramatic blank verse, both from the same author, Chapman:

Guise, O my lord, how shall I cast from me
The bands and coverts hindering me from thee?
The garment or the cover of the mind
The humane soul is; of the soul, the spirit
The proper robe is; of the spirit, the blood;
And of the blood, the body is the shroud.[10]

This passage is not unlike the former, and, on the other hand, is, I think, still more like Donne's poetry than the former. But take a piece like this, also from one of Chapman's plays:

. . . take thy wings
And haste thee where the grey-eyed morn perfumes
Her rosy chariot with Sabaean spices,
Fly, where the evening from the Iberian vales
Takes on her swarthy shoulders Hecate,
Crowned with a grove of oaks: fly where men feel
The cunning axletree: and those that suffer
Beneath the chariot of the snowy Bear.[11]

A passage like this differs from most of the poetry of the sixteenth century, other than the dramatic. It is not a simple melody, but a complicated harmony of feeling; and this again we find in Donne. Yet, on the other hand, it is partly a paraphrase of a passage in one of Seneca's Latin plays, but with a complex richness unknown to Seneca.[12]

The contrast of the Elizabethan lyric with the Caroline lyric is particularly enlightening. The summit of the Elizabethan lyric is, of course, the songs in Shakespeare's plays; but his songs, though ever so much better than other men's, are of the same type. They are essentially poems to be sung to a musical instrument; and the men who wrote them were not primarily trying to express any profound emotion; any subtle or ingenious idea, but to provide something lovely and tuneable. The lyrics of Shakespeare, more than anyone's, demand a tune. Now there are two kinds of "music" in verse. One is that of the lyrics of Shakespeare or Campion, which *demand* the kindred music of the lute or other instrument; a few songs of Shelley's, such as "Music, when soft voices die," and many songs of Burns and Heine make the same demand.[13] Here is a song by Campion. Thomas Campion was one of the most excellent of Elizabethan song-writers, and evidently a man who knew much of music.

Shall I come, if I swim? wide are the waves, you see:
Shall I come, if I fly, my dear Love, to thee?
Streams Venus Will appease; Cupid gives me wings;
All the powers assist my desire
Save you alone, that set my woful heart on fire![14]

Here is the first stanza of a poem of Donne:

If yet I have not all thy love,
Deare, I shall never have it all,
I cannot breathe one other sigh, to move,
Nor can intreat one other teare to fall,
And all my treasure, which should purchase thee,
Sighs, teares, and oathes, and letters I have spent.
Yet no more can be due to mee,
Then at the bargaine made was ment,
If then thy gift of love were partiall,
That some to mee, some should to others fall,
   Deare, I shall never have Thee All.[15]

The song of Campion is as simple in content as possible; its merit lies in its delicate, irregular metre responsive to the music. Donne's lyric has a similarly skilful irregularity; but the metrical beauty is so closely associated with the thought, that if it were sung, the sense would be lost. And Donne's is the second kind of musical verse: the verse which suggests music, but which, so to speak, contains in itself all its possible music; for if set to music, the play of ideas could not be followed. His poems are poems to be read aloud, *not* sung. And with the exception of some few of the lighter "Cavalier lyrics," this is a characteristic of the poetry we shall examine. The lyric has to do more and different work from that of the Elizabethan lyric. The complications of thought and feeling which in the Elizabethan time are found chiefly in dramatic blank verse pass over, with Donne, into the shorter and semi-lyrical poem.

[There are other changes which I should not like to ignore. The court was gradually becoming more civilised. The centre of culture was less positively settled in Italy – to the average Elizabethan a land as remote and fantastic as Hollywood is now – and was shifting to Paris; that is, to a point in much closer contact with London; and as the French gradually became as civilised as the Italians, so the English tended to become as civilised as the French. James I was hardly a highly civilised man by modern standards, but at least his passion for theology, in which he thought himself an adept, did I think tend to raise the standing of abstract thought. His son Charles was not only, what his father had not been, a gentleman, but an accomplished amateur of the arts; and he had, not altogether to his advantage or that of his country, a French wife.[16] But what is still more important, and is a subject of inexhaustible interest, is the religious sensibility of the age – and a related subject which must be kept distinct, the religious-political situation.]

As most of the poets we shall study either wrote religious verse, or were engaged on one side or another in the religious struggles of the Caroline time, it is pertinent to look at both these problems. In its religious sensibility the seventeenth century seems to me the third most interesting period in the history of Christianity; the others being the early period which saw the development of dogma in the Greek and Latin churches, and the thirteenth century. (I must add that when I say the seventeenth century I am thinking primarily of England; for the sixteenth century, so far as Spain and Italy are concerned, is equally important and is part of the same movement.) But between the thirteenth and the seventeenth century there is this important difference. In the thirteenth century such science as existed could be fitted into the theological scheme; the world of thought had an impressive unity; so that one might say that the distinction between philosophers and theologians hardly existed. St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Bonaventura, and even Duns Scotus were philosophers and theologians at once and as one thing.[17] During the sixteenth century two important things happened which are quite distinct. The important point about the Copernican revolution in astronomy is not that it controverted the official astronomy of the Church. It is rather that it affirmed the standing of a separate science in which the laity might be more competent, because more specialised, than the Church. The result would have been equally important in the end, though less sensational, had the astronomers confirmed the accepted astronomy of the Ptolemaic system, by scientific demonstration. For it would equally have tended to limit the sphere of theology. The coincidence of the Protestant Reformation has naturally confirmed the supposition that the scientists and the Protestants were fighting the same battle. They were two quite different battles; and Martin Luther was no more enlightened or more tolerant of the scientific spirit than those who condemned Galileo.

Now, during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the study of theology was very highly developed. An incredible mass of now-forgotten theological literature was turned out; perhaps not more than in our own time, but the books were much bigger and much harder reading. But it was distinctly theology, and not philosophy; and highly controversial theology at that; some of the controversialists on all sides were men of the greatest ability. And one of the points worth remembering about the seventeenth century is that for a moment a kind of equilibrium and parity was arrived at; the age produced great theologians, great men of devotion, and also great scientists. In England, it produced the Royal Society and also the finest devotional verse in the language.[18] In Europe in general, theology, religious practice, science, lay philosophy, art and music are all recorded by great names.

[We do not need to suppose that the ordinary man in that century was more pious than the ordinary Christian layman today.

He may appear so partly because his religious convictions and his political passions were more closely involved; and his religious and political views affected his private life very closely indeed. He had perhaps a smattering more of theology than the average layman today; but his knowledge corresponded rather to the present educated citizen's knowledge let us say of the Naval Conference.[19] In the sixteenth century, the important issue was to defend England against foreign enemies: therefore the potential animosities of different parties and classes in England are not so important. In the seventeenth century the situation is much more complicated. The dangers from abroad are crossed by dangers from within; and almost from the accession of James we may see the Civil Wars to come.[20] And thus in the seventeenth century every man in England had a point of view in which his religious views, his political views, his prejudices of section and class entered; and it is difficult to analyse the ingredients.]

During the reign of James and still more during the reign of Charles I, the nation was divided in three parts, the Roman Catholic, the Anglican, and the Presbyterian and Independent, what we call vaguely the Puritan. In literature, all of these elements more or less reacted on each other. Now the Continent of Europe at that time, with the exception of Northern Germany, part of the Netherlands and Scandinavia, was under the influence of that most interesting movement called the Counter-Reformation, which is represented to us most vividly by the Society of Jesus, and by baroque art.[21] The Society of Jesus, best known to us merely as the Jesuits, had taken upon itself, as part of its task of winning divided Europe back to the Faith, the defence and cultivation of Catholic literature and Catholic art; it aimed to win over what we should now call the intelligentsia to the Church, by espousing the cause of art and letters.[22] We are only now beginning to understand how painstaking was the labour of this attempt to unite the humanities to the Church. The result was that the poetry of Europe in the seventeenth century, such as that of Marino in Italy and, I believe, Vondel in Holland, is very largely coloured by the Spanish imagination, and the Spanish imagination is represented by two very great people indeed: St. Theresa, and St. Ignatius Loyola, the founder of the Society of Jesus.[23]

Neither influence is visible in England during the lifetime of either saint; they both lived in the sixteenth century. It is only apparent at the beginning of the next century; or first in the work of that curious poet Robert Southwell.[24] When I say neither influence, I anticipate a necessary distinction. During the sixteenth century, Spain experienced an extraordinary outburst of mysticism: in other words, she produced at least three great mystics and saints, and probably several hundred pathological ecstatics. The greatest were St. Theresa, and St. John of the Cross, both Carmelites.[25] I think that St. John was the greater, or rather that his writings are very much more important than St. Theresa's; but probably Theresa had the greater influence. At the same time, Spain produced Ignatius, a man of a very different type, a great saint and a very great man indeed. For force of character, there is only one man in contemporary Europe to whom I can compare him, and I do so without the slightest disrespect to the saint: I can only compare him to Lenin. He had a similar intense ruthlessness, though in a better cause.[26] And I make the comparison to Lenin chiefly to emphasise his difference from St. Theresa and St. John.[27] He was no mystic: he was an administrator, a warrior, a born ruler of men; with that fanaticism which brings small men to perdition, and great men to immortality. In the ordinary acceptance of chancelleries and cabinets he was no politician; and, therefore, he was one of the greatest politicians of all.[28]

[In the syllabus of these talks I have suggested the *Exercises* of Ignatius, and something of St. John of the Cross, such as *The Dark Night of the Soul*, or *The Ascent of Mount Carmel*, as suitable reading.[29] It may have seemed to you going rather far afield in order to appreciate the poetry of Donne. But in fact through such people as these the Spanish imagination captured Europe. And when I say imagination, I mean literally that the stock of visual images used in poetry as well as the tone of feeling was considerably indebted to these people.]

Now, if you read and study the *Spiritual Exercises*, you will find a stock of images which reminds you, and by no mere coincidence, of Donne.[30] Donne, as I shall try to show, was no mystic. And neither was St. Ignatius.[31] Mysticism is a gift of grace; you will never become a mystic unless you have the gift. The *Exercises* are not aimed at making mystics; they are not mystical Pelmanism.[32] They are a very practical handbook, like the late Lieut. Müller's handbook of physical exercises, to enable anybody to extend the intellectual conviction of the Faith to imaginative conviction.[33] A similar method might be used by an historian, so steeped in Greek history as to see Thermopylae as he has seen events in his own life, in order to make his readers realise those events.[34] So St. Ignatius works on the imagination, to make us realise the Passion as he realised it. But this is not mysticism; it is merely confirmation of Christian faith. And we shall find the visual imagery of St. Ignatius in Donne, whose childhood was passed under Jesuit influence.[35]

[The mystics, on the other hand, are aiming to communicate a specific experience which they have had. When they use visual imagery, it is merely an expedient. So whereas Ignatius writes a handbook for everyone, Theresa or John writes a book to be understood by but few.]

I spoke earlier of the difference between the thirteenth and the seventeenth century. Here is another difference: in the quality of its mysticism. The mysticism of the thirteenth and twelfth centuries was intellectual and international: two of the greatest medieval mystics, as is not generally observed, were Scots: Richard and Hugh of St. Victor.[36] The mystical treatises of Richard of St. Victor are as dry and abstract as those of the great Indian expositors of mysticism.[37] They use imagery, certainly, but always clearly as analogy.[38] They separate positively the human from the divine. But in the Spanish mystics there is a strong vein of what would now be called eroticism. I am not in the least disposed to belittle them; but their mode of expression does render them liable to the indignities of Freudian analysis.[39] [There is the difference of the time, and there is the difference that allowance must be made, as is not necessary in the thirteenth century, for the racial Spanish temperament.] At any rate, this Spanish mysticism is definitely sensuous or erotic in its mode of expression; and this sensuousness pervades the poetry affected by it, as it pervades baroque art. I wish, however, to keep two things separate. Donne is more affected by Ignatius; Crashaw more by Theresa. We shall see later how this Spanish influence works in with the peculiar figure of speech called the *conceit*, characteristic of much of the poetry of the time.[40]

[I have wished to dwell upon the Spanish and Italian influence upon English poetry of the first part of the seventeenth century, because it has a subtle difference from the continental influences upon the latter part of the sixteenth century. In the sixteenth century, English poets borrowed from foreign authors whom they admired, and from foreign cultures which they admired – if often with a fascinated horror – without really understanding. In the seventeenth century, it is rather a general influence pervading Europe. Mr. Mario Praz, in his brilliant book which I have mentioned in my summary, is inclined to consider Crashaw the finest expression of the baroque spirit in poetry.[41] Now whatever we may say of the greater poets and dramatists of the age preceding Crashaw, we cannot think of any of them as representative of any general European spirit of their time. Crashaw is more like Marino or any of the famous continental poets of the day, than any Elizabethan is like any foreign contemporary.[42] Even in its dissensions, the parts of Europe knew more about each other than they had done in the previous age.

We must try to find out in what ways the poets of that century are like ourselves; but we cannot do so without recognizing the ways in which they were more like each other than like us. And we must remember their differences of religious and political convictions as differences within that peculiarly complex unity which is the seventeenth century. Next week I shall talk about the first of these poets, John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's. And I hope that you will have read as many as you can of the poems of his which are in Grierson's anthology.][43]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 8.30 p.m. on Friday 7 Mar as TSE's first talk in a series of six weekly lectures on seventeenth-century literature. Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets. TSE's outline for these talks is presented in "Syllabus for a Course of Six Talks on Seventeenth Century Poetry" (*L4* 449-51).

2. In "Donne in our Time" (1931), TSE recalls that he first encountered Donne in 1906 in the freshman class of Professor L. B. R. Briggs, Dean of Harvard University (4.369).

3. James I acceded to the throne of England in 1603; his son Charles I was beheaded in 1649.

4. In "Charles Whibley" (1931), TSE remarks: "who, except scholars, and except the eccentric few who are born with a sympathy for such work, or others who have deliberately studied themselves into the right appreciation, can now read through the whole of *The Faerie Queene* with delight?" (4.386). In a letter to Desmond MacCarthy of 14 Nov 1947, TSE confessed that he had not read all of *The Faerie Queene*.

5. TSE assigned Marlowe's erotic poem "Hero and Leander" (completed by George Chapman) in his 1918 tutorial class on Elizabethan literature (1:756).

6. *The Poly-Olbion* (1612 and 1622) is a long patriotic poem by Michael Drayton describing the British landscape. It is titled after the Greek for "having many blessings."

7. In his 1921 review of Herbert Grierson's anthology *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, TSE quotes this passage from *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* and comments: "In Chapman especially there is a direct sensuous apprehension of thought, or a recreation of thought into feeling, which is exactly what we find in Donne" (2.379).

8. *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* V.i.150-65; TSE owned the Mermaid Series edition of *The Plays of George Chapman*, ed. William Lyon Phelps (New York: Charles Scribner, 1895).

9. In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (1927), TSE traces the influence of Senecan stoicism on Elizabethan literature, identifying Chapman and John Marston as "particularly Senecan" (3.247).

10. *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* V.i.315-20.

11. *Bussy D'Ambois* V.iv.98-105. TSE first quotes this favorite passage in "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [IV]" (1919) (2:67) and several times thereafter.

12. In "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [IV]," TSE quotes the relevant lines from Seneca's *Hercules furens* (ll. 1139-40) "sub cardine / glacialis ursae" (2:68).

13. In "Swinburne as Poet" (1920), TSE quotes Shelley's "Music, When Soft Voices Die" (written in 1821) comparing it to a song by Campion (2:182).

14. From *A Book of Ayres* (1601) by Thomas Campion and Philip Rosseter. TSE owned a copy of *Poetical Works (in English) of Thomas Campion* (London: Routledge, 1907).

15. Donne, "Lovers infinitenesse" (1633). In these six broadcasts, TSE uses Herbert Grierson's *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*; hereafter abbreviated *MLP* (here page 4).

16. King James published a commentary on the Book of Revelation in 1588 and commissioned a team of scholars to provide a new translation of the Bible, the Authorized Version of 1611. After failing to secure a prestigious Spanish match, Charles I married Henrietta Maria, daughter of the French King Henry IV. A patron of the arts, Charles assembled a great art collection, including prized works by Raphael and Titian.

17. TSE read Professor Étienne Gilson's studies of the Scholastic philosophers Thomas Aquinas, *Saint Thomas d'Aquin* (1925), and Bonaventura, *La Philosophie de saint Bonaventure* (1924), when preparing his 1926 Clark Lectures, and in 1926 reviewed Maurice De Wulf's *History of Medieval Philosophy* containing sections on prominent thirteenth-century theologians, including Aquinas and John Duns Scotus (2.870).

18. The Royal Society, granted a Royal Charter by Charles II, was founded in 1660.

19. From 21 Jan to 22 Apr 1930, Prime Minister Ramsay MacDonald presided over a naval conference in London, which resulted in a treaty between Great Britain, France, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

20. The English Civil War between supporters of Parliament and King Charles I began in 1642.

21. The Counter-Reformation developed out of a series of complex reforms within the Catholic Church. The Society of Jesus was instrumental in winning back areas in Poland, Hungary, Austria, Germany, and France that had been lost to Protestantism during the Reformation.

TSE's broadcast was published in the *Listener* together with a photograph of the seventeenth-century porch of St. Mary's Church, Oxford, described as "a rare example of English Baroque" (443).

22. In his second Clark lecture, TSE remarks that although the Society of Jesus "produced accomplished men of letters, erudite and subtle commentators . . . and though it counted among its numbers pious and devoted men, it produced no great philosopher, no advance in pure thought" (2:633). On 9 Apr 1926, TSE wrote to Rev. Francis Yealy that the Society of Jesus "could have been no other than what it was, and one can only say that the necessity for the existence of a polemical or militant body was in itself a deplorable necessity" (*L3* 131).

23. In *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* (1925), TSE read Mario Praz's comparison of the poetry of Richard Crashaw with the Dutch dramatist and Catholic convert Joost van den Vondel (1587-1679) as exponents of a northern European baroque art. In *Cross-Currents in English Literature of the XVIIth Century*, recommended by TSE in his bibliography for these broadcasts, Herbert Grierson contends that in Vondel's poetry "one hears the voice of the poet who found his way back to Rome and cannot give too passionate utterance to his sense of regained security, his emotional, sensuous delight in sacraments and ritual and cults, his complete surrender to an unquestioning faith and obedience" (London: Chatto & Windus, 1929), 180.

24. In "The Author of 'The Burning Babe'" (1926), TSE comments: "Reading the poems of Southwell, anyone acquainted with Signor Praz's important *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* is likely to suspect that Southwell had more than a slight knowledge of the Italian poetry, and the Jesuit poetry, both Latin and Italian, of his time" and concludes that "a fuller knowledge of his literary origins would bear testimony to the power of a mode of taste, then sweeping over Europe, though as yet less noticeable in England, which came to be called baroque" (2:798-99).

25. The Order of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel (Carmelites) is a Roman Catholic religious order founded on Mount Carmel in Palestine at the end of the twelfth century. TSE first encountered the Spanish mystics as a student at Harvard in William Inge's *Christian Mysticism* (1899).

26. In "Niccolò Machiavelli" (1927), TSE asserts: "Machiavelli has been the torment of Jesuits and Calvinists, the idol of Napoleons and Nietzsches, a stock figure for Elizabethan drama, and the exemplar of a Mussolini or a Lenin" (3.111).

27. In a 1934 Faber book report on the rejected typescript of "The Disentangled Doom," TSE was annoyed by Major-General J. F. C. Fuller's contention that "in essence, there is little difference between Lenin and St. John."

28. TSE's emphasis on the militaristic, political side of Ignatius's character is derived from Francis Thompson's portrait in his posthumous study *Saint Ignatius Loyola* (1909).

29. TSE's unpublished "Syllabus for a Course of Six Talks on Seventeenth Century Poetry" suggests: "Among the works which contribute to the background of the period are such books as the *Exercises* of St Ignatius Loyola, the writings of St John of the Cross, the *Private Prayers* of Lancelot Andrewes, and Hooker's *Ecclesiastical Polity*" (*L4* 451).

30. For TSE's critique of Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises* (1548) see his third Clark lecture (2:654). In "The Prose of the Preacher" (1929), TSE detects the imagery of Ignatius's *Spiritual Exercises* in Donne's sermons: "his command of the terrors of death and damnation . . . shows

him a student of the Ignatian method" (3.000). Donne himself satirized Ignatius in *Ignatius and his Conclave* (1611).

31. TSE contradicts Evelyn Underhill's assertion in *Mysticism* (1911), a book he studied at Harvard: "The concrete nature of St. Ignatius's work, and especially its later developments has blinded historians to the fact he was a true mystic" (London: Methuen, 1911), 557.

32. Originally devised by William Joseph Ennever in the 1890s, Pelmanism was a system of memory training issuing from the Pelman Institute in London. It was advertised as a system of scientific mental training that strengthened and developed the mind just as physical training strengthened the body. Notable practitioners were the former British Prime Minister Herbert Asquith, Robert Baden-Powell, founder of the Scout movement, and numerous authors, including TSE's acquaintance J. M. Robertson.

33. TSE refers to the popular handbook *My System: Fifteen Minutes' Exercise a Day for Health's Sake* (first published in Danish in 1904; translated into English in 1905) by the gymnastics instructor Jørgen Peter Müller (1866-1938), who was living at this time in Tring in the Chiltern Hills.

34. The last stand of the Spartan king Leonidas against a much larger Persian army took place in the coastal pass of Thermopylae in northern Greece in 480 BC. TSE alludes to Thermopylae (literally Greek for "hot gates") in "Gerontion" (1920).

35. TSE read in Izaak Walton's *Life of Dr. John Donne* (1640) that Donne's tutors "were advised to instill into him particular Principles of the *Romish Church*; of which those Tutors profest (though secretly) themselves to be members." *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert and Robert Sanderson* (London: Oxford UP, 1927), 24.

36. In *Mysticism*, Underhill refers to Richard of St. Victor as "Scotch or Irish" (546), but it is now thought (ODNB) that he was English; the seventeenth century claims that he was a Scot rest on documents no longer extant. Hugh of St. Victor was German, probably born in Lower Saxony.

37. In his Clark lectures, TSE observes: "I wish to draw as sharply as possible the difference between this mysticism of Richard of St. Victor, which is the mysticism also of St. Thomas Aquinas and of Dante, and the mysticism of the Spaniards, which . . . is the mysticism of Crashaw and the Society of Jesus. The Aristotelian-Victorine-Dantesque mysticism is ontological; the Spanish mysticism is psychological. The first is what I call classical, the second romantic" (2:653). On 13 Mar 1926, Rev. F. J. Yealy responded to TSE by claiming that "I think you will find St. Ignatius' own thought as austere and straightforward in its way as that of Richard of St. Victor" (*L3* 101).

38. TSE evidently draws upon Underhill's contention in *Mysticism* that "the greatest mystics, however – Ruysbroack, St. John of the Cross, and St. Teresa [*sic*] herself in her later stages – distinguish clearly between the ineffable Reality which they perceive and the image under which they describe it" (94).

39. TSE's Harvard notecards (Houghton) refer to Dean Inge's strictures in *Christian Mysticism* on the eroticizing of mystical experience evident in the writings of St. Theresa.

40. TSE presents a detailed analysis of Donne's and Crashaw's use of the metaphysical "conceit" in his fourth (2.669) and sixth (2.707) Clark lectures. He develops this theme in subsequent broadcasts in this series, "Rhyme and Reason: The Poetry of John Donne" (4.57) and "The Devotional Poets of the Seventeenth Century: Donne, Herbert, Crashaw" (4.71).

41. In *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra*, Praz concludes: "E anche in questi arditi tentativi di trascendere i confini e le capacità della sua arte il Crashaw consegue, con maggiore intensità e successo degli altri poeti contemporanei, un resultato a cui si può dire aspirasse tutta l'estetica barocca: quella inestricabile complessità di rappresentazione, quell'unica Arte universale in cui tutte le arti confluissero e si amalgamassero confondendosi" (Florence: La voce, 1925), 269. *Trans*: "In these bold attempts at surpassing the limits and possibilities of his own art, Crashaw, better than any of the poets who were his contemporaries, achieves a result which may be said to have been the common aspiration of baroque art: that inextricable complexity of presentation, that one universal Art in which all the arts should blend and become an indistinguishable whole." *The Flaming Heart* (Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1966), 251.

42. Praz asserts that Crashaw "trovò nel Marino il suo autore favorito" (*Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra*, 228). *Trans*: Crashaw "was to find his favourite author in Marino" (*The Flaming Heart*, 215).

43. Grierson's anthology contains nineteen "Love Poems" by Donne, eleven "Divine Poems," and a further five elegies, epistles, satires, in the "Miscellanies" section.

Rhyme and Reason: The Poetry of John Donne[1]

The Listener, 3 (19 Mar 1930) 502-3

[I believe that most people who have read even a few of John Donne's poems know something about his life: and that is exactly the reason why, even in a half-hour's talk, I must say something about his life as well as about his poetry. Donne is, to the common reader, as much a remarkable and enigmatic personality as he is the author of certain poems; therefore popular opinion about his poetry is influenced by popular opinion about the man; and popular opinion may not be altogether right. So I must give a brief outline of his life and character.]

Donne was born in 1573, of a good prosperous middle-class family probably of Welsh origin, in London.[2] His domestic associations were favourable; in fact, he may be said to have belonged to the aristocracy of intellect. His mother was a Heywood, of a family closely associated with Sir Thomas More, that is to say with the most cultured society of Tudor times; and the Heywoods had shown literary ability for several generations. One was an early dramatist; another translated some of Seneca's plays, became a Jesuit father, and suffered considerable hardship in that capacity.[3] The domestic atmosphere was both literary and theological, and largely Roman Catholic (I say largely, because in those times people occasionally changed to and fro from one religious allegiance to another). Izaak Walton tells us that John Donne was both an indefatigable student and a man of pleasure.[4] His studies certainly were very wide; but he applied himself particularly to theology and still more to law, both canon and civil. As for his pleasures, he may have been a man about town in a small way. [These two points are of some interest, because they have led many people to believe (1) that he was a deep philosopher, (2) that he was a mystic, (3) that he had a mediaeval mind, and (4) that in his youth he was a notable rake, and (5) that the second period of his life, when he abandoned poetry to become one of the greatest preachers England has ever known, represents the conversion of a penitent sinner.[5] All five of these beliefs are picturesque, but I believe that all five are wrong, and mislead us in attempting to appreciate his poetry.

At any rate, after a youth passed in various studies and no settled occupation, including one expedition with the forces of Essex to Cadiz, which provided him with material that he used in poetry, he eloped with a young lady – she was only seventeen, named Ann More.[6] She was the niece of the Chancellor, and daughter of the Lieutenant of the Tower; but her father did not approve her marriage to a young man who had spent all his patrimony and had no prospects and nothing but a reputation for learning and accomplishment to recommend him.[7] Then follows a period of great poverty, emphasised by the appearance of one child every year; but apparently Donne and his wife made a very happy marriage of it, and he was a passionately devoted husband. His reputation of learning in divinity came to the ear of James I – the most praiseworthy of whose tastes was his taste for theology – and it became clear that the only way for Donne towards preferment and a steady income was through the Church.[8] Holy orders are not nowadays the best means of increasing one's income; but the reign of James I was a peculiar one, and the case of Donne a peculiar case. So into the Church of England Donne went; and in the Church he had every success short of a bishopric; but it was one of life's ironies that his wife died at the outset of his career of clerical prosperity and success.[9] By far the greater part of the poems which we read were written before he took holy orders, and while he was still quite a young man. So we have two distinct periods in his life: the first that of his amorous and other lyrical verse, his satires and epistles and several other odd poems; and the second, when his chief work is a great number of sermons, which rank with the finest prose in the language, and in which the same gifts appear as in the poems. With the sermons I am not here concerned; but they must be reckoned with; and anyone who is interested may refer to two convenient books, the Selections by Mr. Logan Pearsall Smith, published by the Oxford Press, and the useful volume of complete verse and selected prose, edited by Mr. John Hayward and published by the Nonesuch Press at seven and six.[10]

Now I have listed][11†] five beliefs about Donne's poetry which I contest. The first is that Donne was a philosopher, and consequently a philosophical poet. Metaphysics is, of course, a part of philosophy; so you will say, if Donne is not a philosophical poet, how can he be a metaphysical poet? The answer is that when we speak of philosophical poets, we mean what we say: we are using a term which belongs to our own time and to our own point of view. When we speak of metaphysical poets, we are using a convenient term used first by Dryden, and confirmed by Dr. Samuel Johnson.[12] It is only a few years ago that a brilliant philosopher and man of letters, Mr. George Santayana, in his book, *Three Philosophical Poets* (Lucretius, Dante, Goethe), fixed for us the meaning of "philosophical poetry." Philosophical poetry is poetry in which the poet has done one of two things. He has either written a poem to express in verse a particular theory of the universe which he has taken over from some philosopher – Lucretius wrote his poem to expound the philosophy of Epicurus and Democritus in verse, and Dante expounded substantially the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas in verse – or else he makes his own system of philosophy and expresses that in verse; and the latter is more what Goethe did.[13] But in philosophical poetry the poet *believes* in some theory about life and the universe and makes poetry of it. Metaphysical poetry, on the other hand, does not imply belief; it has come to mean poetry in which the poet *makes use* of metaphysical ideas and theories. He may believe some theory, or he may he believe none: but he must be a poet who experiences emotion through thought, as well as one who thinks about emotion. Of metaphysical poetry in general we may say that it gets its effects by suddenly producing an emotional equivalent for what seemed merely a dry idea, and by finding the idea of a vivid emotion. It moves between abstract thought and concrete feeling; and strikes us largely by contrast and continuity, by the curious ways in which it shows thought and feeling as different aspects of one reality.

[That is, generally, what "metaphysical poetry" means to us. But the history of the term is also instructive. When Butler wrote in *Hudibras*

He knew what's what, and that's as high
As metaphysic wit can fly[14]

he was using the word as it was generally applied to poetry in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. It meant elaborate, ingenious, playing upon ideas and their associations; it required, indeed, some practice and knowledge of formal philosophy and its terms and methods in order to be developed most successfully; but it never implied that the poet had any philosophical convictions, or was trying to express or illustrate any one system of thought. The term "metaphysical poetry" at no time implied that. For Dr. Johnson the metaphysical poets were first of all, men of learning, and secondly what he called "wits."[15] What Johnson, and before him Dryden, called "wit" is not at all what we mean by the word. Johnson apparently agrees with Dryden that the metaphysical poets were above Dryden in wit but below Dryden in poetry; whereas we nowadays would consider Dryden to be more witty, and certainly Donne to be more "poetical" than Dryden.[16]

But though we cannot agree with Dr. Johnson, partly for the reason that meanings change as times change, it is not safe to disagree completely with him either.[17] He admits that the metaphysical poets were men of learning, and learning (he means) in philosophy; but it does not occur to him that they were trying to expound any one theory which they believed. And this, I am sure, is true of Donne. But we must be careful not only about the meaning of the term, but about the poets included under it. Here again, there is a confusing change. For Dryden and Johnson it meant certain names of those whom they considered the most considerable poets of the period; for us it means that too; only, we have re-shuffled the poets. For Dryden and Johnson, it meant Cowley, Donne and Cleveland first and foremost.[18] For us, Cowley is less interesting, and Cleveland of still less interest; our "metaphysical poets" are primarily Donne, Crashaw, Herbert, Marvell, Vaughan; with others, Traherne, King, Lord Herbert and others in the background.[19] So you see that as our valuations have changed, so the meaning of the term "metaphysical poets" has changed too. We must take the term easily, as at least a convenient name for a group. But the one fixed point is Donne. For Donne seemed a fine poet to Ben Jonson, his contemporary, to Dryden, to Dr. Samuel Johnson, and to us; that is why Donne requires more careful attention than any others of his age or kind.[20]

To return now to the first point.] Donne was a learned student of philosophy. But his poetry is not that of a man who believes any philosophy. He enjoys his learning, and enjoys using a philosophical idea in poetry. His poetry expresses no settled belief in anything.[21] Read all the poems given in Grierson's anthology and you will find that it is the poetry of a man of strong feelings and of powerful and learned mind. A poet like Lucretius or Dante uses one whole system of thought and philosophy, and presumably believes it. A poet like Donne has read vastly of many philosophers of many schools: he borrows notions, concepts, terms and verbal methods. Take a poem like "The Prohibition."[22]* It is neatly constructed. The first stanza is a development of its first line, "Take heed of loving me." The second develops the opposite thought, "Take heed of hating me." The third combines the two, "Yet, love and hate me too."[23] The whole is a good example of what Dryden and Johnson call "wit": it develops two ideas and unites them in a paradox.[24] Now, you may ask, this is very amusing and clever, but is it poetry, and, if so, why? Is it serious enough to be poetry? Well, it gives the emotional equivalent of a state of mind. This borderland where an emotion turns into a thought and a thought turns into an emotion is Donne's special province. This leads us to observe that Donne is not interested so much in expounding an idea because he believes it, as in picking out ideas because he is interested in the feeling they give. Take that very beautiful poem "The Ecstasy." It expresses by means of ideas the feeling of spiritual union of two lovers; but it is not a definitely held Platonic theory of spiritual union. It contains some very difficult stanzas; for instance,

> But as all several souls contain
>   Mixture of things, they know not what,
> Love, these mixt souls, doth mix again,
>   And makes both one, each this and that.

and, a few lines later,

> When love, with one another so
>   Interinanimates two souls,
> That abler soul, which thence doth flow,
>   Defects of loneliness controls.[25]

This poem has been taken as a statement of a mystical philosophy of love; and even Professor Grierson, whose opinion I must respect, speaks of it as important because of being Donne's "metaphysic of love," referring quite rightly to obvious origins in neo-Platonic philosophy.[26] Well, it is perhaps a little reckless of me to ask you to take Donne's philosophy less seriously than Professor Grierson does, but I cannot see that Donne held this philosophy except for the purpose of this particular poem. Dante, for example, held, I believe, a more or less consistent theory of love which informs all of his poetry. But the conviction has more and more grown on me in reading Donne that he was interested in philosophy, but very little in the discovery of truth through philosophy; and from a mind stored with wide and curious reading he drew material as he wanted it for a particular purpose. And, in this poem, you cannot look at the experience – the sense or illusion of perfect spiritual unity between two persons – and the explanation of the experience as two separate things. It is not a philosopher explaining a feeling, for the explanation is itself felt. The feeling is transmuted by being thought about in this way; and it is feeling transformed by thought, and thought transformed by feeling, that interests Donne, not the question whether the thought forms a consistent theory.[27] [With some poets, it is essential that they believe some theory which is the foremost of their poems; but not so with Donne. I cannot find any consistent philosophy in Donne's verse, but a good many inconsistent ones.]

Nor is there any evidence for saying that Donne had a "mediaeval mind," or that his merit is to have expressed a dualism of mediaeval and modern in his work. He had read a good deal of scholastic philosophy, but not more than any other theologian of his time; and the list of his reading which has been compiled shows that he was at least equally conversant with the theological writers of his own time and the generation before. On the contrary, his serious play with ideas seems to be peculiarly modern, and to make him at least as modern as Montaigne; his delight in ideas as ideas, in theories as theories, is anything but mediaeval.[28] Nor is the contention that Donne is a "mystical poet," based chiefly on this poem "The Ecstasy," any better founded.[29] Had he had a mystical turn of mind, one would expect to find some trace of it in his later work, his sermons and devotional writings. He was a great preacher, a great master of a particular form of prose, a fine psychologist; and I believe his religion was quite sincere. But there he was rather the theologian, or rather the student of theology, and the preacher, than the mystic. In all of his religious writings there is little sign of that privacy so characteristic of the mystic, that assurance of experience incommunicable: he was a man of public life.

Now if we can miss the point of Donne's love poems, his songs and sonnets, by taking the philosophy too seriously, so we may miss the point also by taking the personal emotions in them too seriously. This does not mean that the poems themselves are to be taken as frivolous; it merely means that we may look for the seriousness in the wrong place. The seriousness, I will say again, is in the peculiar fusion of the thought and the feeling. Many people, taking some of his remarks about himself literally, believe that Donne led a passionate and dissolute youth, and regard his poems as outbursts of unrestrained amorousness.[30] In many of his poems I feel myself that the original ingredient of personal experience is a rather thin fluid. "Twicknam Garden" is an exercise on a quite conventional theme, the deserted lover. What matters is what Donne does with it.

Blasted with sighs, and surrounded with tears,
Hither I come to seek the spring,
And at mine eyes, and at mine ears,
Receive such balms, as else cure everything:
But O, self traitor, I do bring

The spider love, which transubstantiates all,
And can convert manna to gall,
And that this place may thoroughly be thought
True Paradise, I have the serpent brought.[31]

[(If you have this poem in front of you, please keep the place, as I shall revert to it presently in speaking of Donne's metric).] The real point about this protestation, which differentiates it from the conventional exclamations of the deserted Elizabethan lover, is its complication by curious ideas. He makes what is almost a kind of pun upon the theological notion of transubstantiation, then a witty reference to the Garden of Eden.[32] Similarly in "The Relic" he begins with a rather grisly cynicism, suddenly strikes out a line which would distinguish the finest of Elizabethan tragedies, and proceeds to play solemnly upon a notion of religious relic-worship.

When my grave is broke up again
Some second guest to entertain
(For graves have learnt that woman-head
To be to more than one a bed),
And he that digs it spies
A bracelet of bright hair about the bone,
Will he not let us alone,
And think that there a loving couple lies,
Who thought that this device might be some way
To make their souls, at the last busy day,
Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?[33]

Then read the second stanza [by yourselves]. You may think that Donne is letting you down, or having a joke at your expense.[34] But what gives the particular emotional tone to this kind of poetry is just these odd changes of key, these sudden changes and strange juxtapositions which combine to make a unique emotional whole. [And at this point we must stop to examine a trick of thought, or a device of language, which is characteristic of all the "metaphysical poets," which indeed is the best sign of their common parentage, the *conceit*.

I think that the best way for me to approach the conceit is to contrast it with two typical examples of figures of speech – simile or metaphor – from Dante and Shakespeare. When Dante is trying to make us see the figures in a certain circle of Hell where there is only a dim twilight, he says "they knitted their brows at us, like an old tailor threading a needle."[35] The purpose and effect of this simile, like most of Dante's are highly practical: it is to make us see the scene he is describing. When Shakespeare makes one of his characters describe the appearance of Cleopatra dead, he says

she looks like sleep
As she would catch another Antony
In her strong toil of grace.[36]

Here again, though the figure is more complex than that of Dante, the purpose and effect are practical: to impress more deeply upon us the extraordinary fascination of the woman who altered the fate of men and empires through her beauty. Dante and Shakespeare both use figures of speech to intensify our interest in their main subject. Now the *conceit* is merely a figure of speech which instead of concentrating our attention attracts it to several things at once. Look at Donne's poem "A Valediction." The idea is that the two lovers love each other in such a way that absence rather cements their devotion than weakens it. The first stanza is a figure of a way of death; the third is a figure of the difference between earthquake and disturbance of the celestial spheres of mediaeval astronomy; the sixth is a comparison of their two souls to gold which can be beaten to indefinite thinness; the seventh, eighth and ninth introduce a wholly new simile: the lady, who remains at home, is the fixed foot of a compass, which stays and revolves at the same point; the other foot of the compass is the lover who must be absent.[37]

Now obviously Donne is employing these figures of speech very differently from Dante or Shakespeare. The skill in using them, and the pleasure we get from them, is largely due to the mental ingenuity in showing analogies between objects most remote from each other; and this is very nearly what eighteenth-century critics like Dr. Johnson mean when they speak of *wit*.[38] But Donne never goes too far; and by going as far as he does, he expresses a new kind of feeling; a very self-conscious passion which thinks curiously about itself and becomes something peculiarly interesting in the process. I think that we may best understand the *conceit* by understanding the odd mixture of thinking and feeling which causes it: the conceit is a figure of speech which is not there to concentrate the attention, but rather to disperse it. In the lesser men, who were mere stylists who pushed the conceit as far as it would go, the conceit becomes a parasite which devours any original body of feeling which might have existed. Take these lines of Cleveland:

Since 'tis my doom, Love's undershrieve,
    Why this reprieve?
Why doth my she-advowson fly
    Incumbency?[39]

I once understood what these lines meant, but I have forgotten; I cannot keep all that play upon highly technical legal metaphors in my head; this is a *conceit* which defeats its own purpose. If my account of the conceit is not quite intelligible, I hope it will become so in later talks when I have discussed the conceits of such poets as Crashaw and Marvell.

It is an impossible task to introduce a poet like Donne satisfactorily in half an hour; you will very likely have wondered that I have not yet spoken of a quality in Donne's verse without which it would not be poetry.] I have referred to the quality of Donne's thought, and its relation to his sensibility. I have not spoken of a kind of conversational tone in his poetry, which is a matter of choice and arrangement of words; and it is a rare and precious quality. It makes one feel that Donne is himself speaking to you personally and familiarly, although speaking great poetry. It is closely allied to what we call "sincerity" in poetry; though we are not to believe that sincerity in poetry is the same as, or is due to, sincerity about the facts of the poet's life. I have not the space to explain this further; you will certainly feel it yourselves in reading him. I can only mention one more important quality of his verse: its metrical skill and variety. The eighteenth century found his verse rough and unpolished; that is because the eighteenth century had got far away from the sung poem, had so far forgotten the musical foundation of verse, that it could not understand him. I am not depreciating the very great virtues of eighteenth-century verse; but its virtues were not the virtues of song; it approximated rather to those of a really first-rate parliamentary oration.[40] Now Donne occurs just at the turn of time when musical metre was still alive – indeed, some of his songs were set to music – and when dramatic metre was still alive; and what the eighteenth century declared to be crude irregularities in his verse we now admire and imitate.[41] Turn again to the first stanza of "Twicknam Garden" [which I read aloud], and you will find that it has the irregularity of the finest Elizabethan blank verse, and at the same time a singing quality which is not far removed from the Elizabethan song.

[In a talk which has had to be compressed to the point of mutilation I have been unable to mention Donne's Elegies, or Satires, or that curious long poem, "The Progress of the Soul," or "The Anatomy of the World," better known as the "Anniversaries." I can only say that these are among his finest poems.[42] Nor have I referred to his religious poems, some of which are very fine indeed, because they are eclipsed by the magnificent sermons which mark the second period of his life.

I wish that I was talking about Donne, and not only about his poetry. If you like the man's verse, he becomes very near and important to you, with his peculiar mixture of emotion and thought. He was not only a great poet: he was great man, a successful man, and I believe a good and religious man; a better and more religious man than the next great Dean in English history, Jonathan Swift.[43] Yet I cannot help thinking of him as a failure. In his youth he wrote fine poetry, in his age he wrote fine prose; but there is nowhere that mark of the Peace of God which we discern at the end of Dante, Beethoven and I believe Shakespeare.[44] In his great sermons are echoed all the voices of the Elizabethan dramatists talking of death, and are reflected all the somber images of Ignatius; but they end in torment not in reconciliation.[45] Of the religious poets to be considered next week, none is so great and original a poet as Donne, to whom they all owe much; but there is none of them for whom we feel so much personal affection, or of whom we think with so much sadness.][46]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 8.30 p.m. on Friday 14 Mar as TSE's second talk in a series of six weekly lectures on seventeenth-century literature. Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets. TSE's outline for these talks is presented in "Syllabus for a Course of Six Talks on Seventeenth Century Poetry" (*L4* 449-51).

2. In 1927, F. P. Wilson demonstrated that Donne was born "towards the end of 1571 or between January and June 19 1572" ("Notes on the Early Life of John Donne," *Review of English Studies*, 3, July 1927), 277. Donne claimed kinship through his father with the family of "Dwnn" (Welsh for Donne) in Kidwelly in Carmarthenshire. Izaak Walton's *Life of Dr. John Donne* (1640) gives Donne's date of birth as 1573 and states he was "lineally descended from a very antient Family in *Wales*." *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert and Robert Sanderson* (London: Oxford UP, 1927), 23.

3. Donne was the son of Elizabeth Heywood, the youngest daughter of the dramatist John Heywood. His uncle was the Jesuit missionary and translator Jasper Heywood, whom TSE praised in his 1927 introduction to *Seneca his Tenne Tragedies* (3.220). Both the Heywoods and Mores were recusant families: Donne alludes to their persecution in *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610).

4. In his *Life of Dr. John Donne*, Walton says of Donne that "The latter part of his life may be said to be a continued study . . . But upon Saturday he usually gave himself and his mind a rest from the weary burthen of his weeks meditations, and usually spent that day in visitation of friends, or some other diversions of his thoughts," adding: "Nor was his age only so industrious, but in the most unsettled days of his youth, his bed was not able to detain him beyond the hour of four in the morning: and it was no common business that drew him out of his chamber till past ten. All which time was employed in study; though he took great liberty after it" (67).

5. In the second of his Clark lectures, TSE summarizes Mary Paton Ramsay's thesis in *Les Doctrines médiévales chez Donne* (1917) as follows: "that Donne possessed a 'very complete' philosophical system and a profound mysticism and that his conception of the universe, and his philosophical technique, are essentially mediaeval" (2:628). Edmund Gosse's biographical study, *Life and Letters of John Donne* (1899), portrays Donne's early life before his conversion as frivolous and marked by illicit love affairs.

6. Donne took part in the Earl of Essex's expeditions against Spain, setting sail for Cadiz in June 1596 and a year later for the Azores. Grierson's 1912 edition of Donne's poems points out that both "The Storme" and "The Calme" draw upon events of the second expedition which ended in disarray due to bad weather.

7. In Dec 1601, Donne married the seventeen-year-old Anne More in a clandestine service. Her father, Sir George More, was outraged and petitioned Donne's employer Sir Thomas Egerton to dismiss him from service, placing the newlyweds in great financial difficulty.

8. In his *Life of Dr. John Donne*, Walton says: "The *King* had formerly both known and put a value upon his Company: and had also given him some hopes of a State-imployment; being always much pleas'd when Mr. *Donne* attended him" (44). Walton adds that James I suggested Donne enter the ministry of the Church of England. On 23 Jan 1615, Donne was ordained deacon and priest in St. Paul's Cathedral, London, and was soon after appointed to a royal chaplaincy.

9. Anne More died in Aug 1617 days after giving birth to a stillborn child, leaving Donne the single parent of seven children (five died in infancy).

10. For TSE's review of Logan Pearsall Smith's edition of *Donne's Sermons*, see "The Preacher as Artist" (1919) (2:165). In a letter to Austin Duncan-Jones of 15 Jun 1928, TSE lamented "selections *from* sermons, like Pearsall Smith's useless Oxford text of Donne" (*L4* 183), and in "The Prose of the Preacher" (1929), he stated that he preferred John Hayward's Nonesuch edition of Donne's *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, in which Hayward acknowledged his debt to TSE's advice on editorial matters (3.667).

11†. In *Listener*: "There are five beliefs"

12. TSE refers to Dryden's remark in "A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (1693) that Donne "affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where nature only should reign; and perplexes the minds of the fair sex with nice speculations of philosophy, when he should engage their hearts, and entertain them with the softnesses of love." In *Lives*, Johnson observes with Donne in mind: "About the beginning of the seventeenth century, appeared a race of writers that may be termed metaphysical poets" (8).

13. In his introductory Clark lecture, TSE asserts: "You can make the term 'metaphysical' equivalent to Mr. Santayana's term 'philosophical' in his book *Three Philosophical Poets*. This book . . . too little read, though one of the most brilliant of Mr. Santayana's works, consists of

studies of Lucretius, Dante and Goethe. It is clear that for Mr. Santayana a philosophical poet is one with a scheme of the universe, who embodies that scheme in verse, and essays to realise his conception of man's part and place in the universe." TSE then concludes: "If you identify 'metaphysical' with 'philosophical' and limit 'philosophical' to those poets who have given expression to a system or some view of the universe, and man's place in it, which has some philosophical equivalent – as Epicurus, Aquinas, or, for Goethe, which expresses half the philosophy of Europe from his own time to William James – then the distinction is perfectly clear. Mr. Santayana's three will exhaust the list of metaphysical poets. But I think that the effect of Mr. Santayana's book is a little too clearly to *trancher les genres*. As a philosopher, he is more interested in poetical philosophy than in philosophical poetry" (2:613).

14. *Hudibras* (1663-78), Part I, Canto I, ll. 149-50, *The Poetical Works of Samuel Butler*, vol 1 (London: Bell and Daldy, 1866), 7.

15. In *Lives*, Johnson contends that: "The metaphysical poets were men of learning, and to show their learning was their whole endeavour" (8).

16. TSE refers to Johnson's reflections on the "wit" of the metaphysical poets: "Those, however, who deny them to be poets; allow them to be wits. Dryden confesses of himself and his contemporaries, that they fall below Donne in wit; but maintains that they surpass him in poetry" (9).

17. In "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), TSE remarks: "we must not reject the criticism of Johnson (a dangerous person to disagree with) without having mastered it, without having assimilated the Johnsonian canons of taste (2:383).

18. In *Lives*, Johnson says that metaphysical poetry "had been recommended by the example of Donne, a man of very extensive and various knowledge" and observes that: "Their immediate successors, of whom any remembrance can be said to remain, were Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Cleveland, and Milton" (10). Johnson's examples of the style of metaphysical poetry are drawn from Donne, Cowley, and Cleveland.

19. Donne, Crashaw, Herbert, Marvell and Vaughan are the most frequently represented poets in Grierson's anthology *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (hereafter abbreviated *MLP*). It contains a few poems by King and Lord Herbert, but none by the recently discovered Traherne.

20. Ben Jonson praised his contemporary in the poem "To John Donne" (1616).

21. TSE echoes Grierson's introduction: "The thought in his [Donne's] poetry is not his primary concern but the feeling. No scheme of thought, no interpretation of life became for him a complete and illuminating experience. The central theme of his poetry is ever his own intense personal moods, as a lover, a friend, an analyst of his own experiences worldly and religious" (*MLP* xxviii).

22*. TSE's note: "See page 22 of Grierson's *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century from Donne to Butler*. Oxford University Press, 6s."

23. TSE modernizes the spelling of quotations from Grierson's edition for readers of the *Listener*.

24. In *Lives*, Johnson characterizes metaphysical wit: "But wit, abstracted from its effects upon the hearer, may be considered as a kind of *discordia concors*; a combination of dissimilar images, or discovery of occult resemblances in things apparently unlike" (9). For TSE's

discussion of Dryden's definition of "wit" in his dedicatory letter to *Annus Mirabilis* (1667), see his Clark lectures (2:730).

25. TSE modernizes the title and text of Grierson's edition (*MLP* 17). For his detailed discussion of "The Extasie" (1633), see the third of his Clark lectures, "Donne and the *Trecento*" (2:655-60).

26. In his 1912 "Commentary" on Donne's poems, Grierson says of "The Extasie": "This is one of the most important lyrics as a statement of Donne's metaphysic of love, of the interconnexion and mutual dependence of body and soul." Referring to the philosophy of Plotinus, Grierson explains: "Ecstasy in Neo-Platonic philosophy was the state of mind in which the soul, escaping from the body, attained to the vision of God, the One, the Absolute." *The Poems of John Donne*, vol 2 (London: Oxford UP, 1912), 41, 42.

27. Grierson contends: "Passionate thinking is always apt to become metaphysical, probing and investigating the experience from which it takes rise. All these qualities are in the poetry of Donne" (*MLP* xvi).

28. Montaigne's *Essais* (1580) were translated into English by John Florio in 1603.

29. The view that "The Extasie" expressed Donne's mysticism was widely held at the time.

30. This approach was taken to excess by Hugh l'Anson Fausset in *John Donne: A Study in Discord* (1924), a book which TSE complained to Mary Hutchinson was "unsound and shallow" (*L2* 528).

31. "Twicknam garden" (*MLP* 9).

32. transsubstantiation or transubstantiation (OED): "The conversion in the Eucharist of the whole substance of the bread into the body and of the wine into the blood of Christ, only the appearances (and other 'accidents') of bread and wine remaining: according to the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church"

33. "The Relique" (*MLP* 21).

34. TSE comments on this stanza in his fourth Clark lecture, "The Conceit in Donne": "Here, you see, Donne has lost his focus on the *meaning* of the notion of the bracelet on the bone; he is occupied with the possible consequences of the notion. And I think it is safe to say that Donne's method is frequently to proceed from the greater to the less; from the central to the peripheral, from the passionate to the reflective" (2.674-75).

35. *Inferno* XV.20-21: "sì ver noi aguzzavan le ciglia, / come vecchio sartor fa nella cruna." These lines are marked in TSE's copy (Houghton).

36. *Antony and Cleopatra* V.ii.349-51.

37. TSE refers to Donne's "A Valediction: forbidding mourning" (*MLP* 14-15).

38. Before quoting Donne's conceit in *Lives*, Johnson comments: "To the following comparison of a man that travels and his wife that stays at home, with a pair of compasses, it may be doubted whether absurdity or ingenuity has the better claim" (17). In his fourth Clark lecture, TSE says of this conceit: "This figure has been greatly admired, and it must be admitted to be highly successful, intelligible, apt and striking" (2:679).

39. From "To Julia to Expedite her Promise" in *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*, vol 3, ed. George Saintsbury (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1921), 83. Saintsbury's notes to the poem helpfully point out that shrieve = "Sheriff," advowson = "right of presenting to or enjoying a benefice"

and incumbency = "the actual occupation or enjoyment" (83). Quoting the whole stanza from which these lines appear in his fourth Clark lecture, TSE comments that he had "never taken the trouble to understand" their meaning (2:682).

40. In "The Tudor Biographers" (1929), TSE claims that "good parliamentary oratory is hardly possible before the eighteenth century" (3.683).

41. Alexander Pope took it upon himself to rewrite Donne in "The Satires of Dr. John Donne, Dean of St. Paul's, Versified" (1736).

42. TSE discusses Donne's satires, elegies, and the two "Anniversaries" poems in his fifth Clark lecture, "Donne's Longer Poems" (2:686).

43. Jonathan Swift was installed as Dean of St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, in 1713.

44. TSE's note to line 433 of *The Waste Land* remarks that "the Peace of God, which passeth understanding" (Philippians 4:7) "is a feeble translation of the content" of the Sanskrit word Shantih. TSE's thoughts on the late styles of Beethoven, Shakespeare, and Dante are influenced by his reading of J. W. N. Sullivan's *Beethoven: His Spiritual Development* (1927), in which the late quartets were treated in the chapter "God the Companion," and by G. Wilson Knight's *Myth and Miracle: An Essay on the Mystic Symbolism of Shakespeare* (1929), in which Shakespeare's late plays were compared to Dante's *Commedia*.

45. TSE echoes Grierson's assertion that George Herbert was "a much more contented Anglican than Donne ever became" (*MLP* xxvii).

46. TSE's next broadcast in this series examines the "devotional" poetry of Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw. (4.71)

The Devotional Poets of the Seventeenth Century: Donne, Herbert, Crashaw[1]

The Listener, 3 (26 Mar 1930) 552-53

[I had to spend most of my time last week in contesting current superstitions about John Donne, and the rest in trying to explain the nature of the figures of speech called conceits. But so far I have not said enough about his positive merits; and if I left it at that you might well wonder what reason there is for calling him a great or a fine poet. So I must say a little more about him before passing on to his younger contemporaries.]

Donne's great innovation in his choice of language is his replacement of the stock vocabulary of Elizabethan poetry, what we may call its mythology, by a new mythology drawn from philosophical, theological, legal and scientific terminology. A similar attempt at renovation appears in some of the poetry being written to-day. One effect of such originality is to give a direct conversational quality – a quality sometimes called "sincerity" in poetry. I do not like the term "sincerity" for this purpose, because it suggests that direct expression of a "sincere" feeling, which is a different thing; and it is this quality miscalled sincerity which makes people think they get so much closer to the "personality" of Donne than they do, let us say, to Edmund Spenser.[2] There is another, and a simpler, reason, for the conversational quality of Donne's verse, and that is that much of it is cast in the form developed by Browning: the dramatic monologue, in which we imagine a scene and the other person addressed.[3] And there is a third reason. Besides the choice of vocabulary, Donne's great inventiveness is shown in his choice and variation of metres; and we may say that in metric he hovers between the singing and the spoken word, in content between thought and feeling, and in vocabulary between the technical word and the dramatic speech.

Ben Jonson, Dryden and Samuel Johnson all spoke hard words of Donne's irregularities in versification.[4] This seems very odd to us, because the art of his versification is for us one of his greatest accomplishments. They may have formed their opinion partly upon the Satires, which are written in five-foot couplets; and the satires certainly are less polished than his best work. But there is every reason to believe that Donne worked very hard over the form of his poems. As a master of the long stanza of many lines, varying the length of line and number of syllables and the rhyme pattern, he is second in his time only to Spenser. Nearly every poem among his Songs and Sonnets is an experiment with a new arrangement: not all are completely successful, but the number of successes is very high.[5] Here is the first stanza of "The Funeral" (page 18):[6*]

Whoever comes to shroud me, do not harm
  Nor question much
That subtle wreath of hair, which crowns my arm;
The mystery, the sign you must not touch,
  For 'tis my outward soul,
Viceroy to that, which then to heaven being gone,
Will leave this to control,
And keep these limbs, her provinces, from dissolution.

Here is another form of stanza (the second, in the middle of page 14):

But I am none; nor will my sun renew.
You lovers, for whose sake the lesser sun
  At this time to the Goat is run
  To fetch new lust, and give it you,
Enjoy your summer all;
Since she enjoys her long night's festival,
Let me prepare towards her, and let me call
This hour her vigil, and her eve, since this
Both the year's, and the day's deep midnight is.[7]

[And look again at the first stanza of "Twicknam Garden," which I read last week (page 9). It has the irregularity of the most highly developed blank verse, with still something of the singing quality of Elizabethan song.]

These are, I think, the two great creative acts of Donne: his introduction of a new vocabulary in verse, and his introduction of new metres. And a great poet, even when he uses a simple common metre, always gives it a personal stamp of sound; your ear, just as much as your perception of the meaning, tells you who wrote it. Take a stanza from "A Valediction" (page 14):

So let us melt, and make no noise,
  No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
'Twere profanation of our joys
  To tell the laity our love.[8]

[Or from the "Ecstasy" (page 16):

And whilst our souls negotiate there,
We like sepulchral statues lay;
All day, the same our postures were,
And we said nothing, all the day.

I have spoken of vocabulary and stock of images, and of metric, as if there were two quite distinct things; but you cannot wholly separate them: the use of the word *negotiate*, for instance, has its part both in the originality of choice of words and the originality of development of metre.[9]

We shall find that other poets took the hint from Donne's new vocabulary and from his new figures of speech; and developed them in several ways. But no other poet whom we shall look at has a fraction of Donne's resourcefulness of versification, or even attempted a fraction of what he did; and that is why he is so much the greatest of these poets; not because his passion is more intense, or his thought more profound, or his feeling more sincere, but because he knew how to manage words.[10] The French painter Degas once complained to his friend the poet Mallarmé that he could not understand why he could not write poetry, because he had plenty of good ideas. "Yes," replied Mallarmé, "but poetry is not made with ideas, it is made with words."[11] He meant that it is not the idea behind the poetry that makes poetry, but only the idea which is one with, incarnate in the word.]

I must at least mention the finest of Donne's long poems, because you will not find them in any anthology, and must read them in one of the complete editions I have mentioned.[12]* They are all worth reading, but there is none so fine, in my opinion, as one called "The Anatomy of the World, otherwise the two Anniversaries." It is a strange poem, strange in its occasion; it is two funeral panegyrics written to please a rich patron, the subject being the patron's daughter, whom Donne had never even seen.[13] Not a promising subject for inspiration, you would think; and the praise he lavished cannot be what we call "sincere." But he made a magnificent thing of it[, and I will read three short passages:

She, she is gone; she's gone; when thou knowest this,
What fragmentary rubbish this world is
Thou knowst, and that it is not worth a thought;
He honours it too much that thinks it nought.
Think then, my soul, that death is but a groom,

Which brings a taper to the outward room,
Whence thou spiest first a little glimmering light,
And after brings it nearer to thy sight:

we understood
Her by her sight; her pure and eloquent blood
Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought
That one might almost say, her body thought;

Thou lookst through spectacles; small things seem great
Below; but up into the watch-tower get,
And see all things despoiled of fallacies:
Thou shalt not peep through lattices of eyes,
Nor hear through labyrinths of ears, nor learn
By circuit or collections to discern.][14]

The next three poets whom I have to mention, George Herbert, Crashaw and Vaughan are chiefly known for their religious and devotional poems. That is a convenient distinction between "religious" and "devotional": I call "religious" what is inspired by religious feeling of some kind; and "devotional" that which is directly about some subject connected with revealed religion.[15] The latter term is, therefore, the more restricted. Vaughan might be called rather a religious poet; Herbert, an Anglican priest, and Crashaw, a convert to Rome who died in Italy, are positively devotional. Now, what is impressive about the religious poetry of this time is its variety; all of these men are very different from each other, and from Donne; so I shall first quote one famous sonnet of Donne's later years, to show what *his* best religious poetry was like (page 86):

At the round earth's imagined corners, blow
Your trumpets, angels, and arise, arise
From death, you numberless infinities
Of souls, and to your scattered bodies go,
All whom the flood did, and fire shall o'erthrow,
All whom war, dearth, age, agues, tyrannies,
Despair, law, chance, hath slain, and you whose eyes,
Shall behold God, and never taste death's woe.
But let them sleep, Lord, and me mourn a space,
For, if above all these, my sins abound,
Tis late to ask abundance of thy grace,

When we are there; here on this lowly ground,
Teach me how to repent; for that's as good
As if thou hadst sealed my pardon, with thy blood.[16]

The thought is more complicated and difficult, but I think that you can catch an anticipation here of the magnificent style of Milton's religious sonnets. Donne's devotional poems have the same quality of verbal grandeur that we find in his sermons; and the tone is quite different from that of either Herbert or Crashaw.

Donne was born about 1573; Herbert was born in 1593, and died in 1633; Crashaw was born in 1613.[17] Herbert then was twenty years younger than Donne; and Crashaw was forty years younger. So, as Donne is Elizabethan and Jacobean, these two are Jacobean and Caroline. George Herbert was one of the famous Welsh family of Herberts, and brother to the Lord Herbert who was a brilliant courtier, some of whose verse is worthily included in the Grierson anthology. George Herbert also began life as a courtier; and, like Donne, owed his entry into holy orders to the discrimination of King James.[18] But there is this difference between Donne and Herbert, that whereas most of the poems by which Donne is remembered were written before he took orders, and are distinctly *not* religious verse, the poems by which we remember Herbert were probably all written after he took orders, and are all religious verse. It may be partly a consequence of this that Herbert gained the reputation of great saintliness; Izaak Walton, in his life of Mr. George Herbert, perhaps overdoes it.[19] But we must remember that in those times a pleasure-loving man about town could become a devout clergyman without being either a case of Pauline conversion or a case of hypocrisy. Herbert, at any rate, was an exemplary Vicar of Bemerton for the last years of his short life, and there composed most of his poems.[20] He enjoyed likewise a reputation of learning and scholarship.

I think the best way to introduce Herbert's poetry is to quote a poem which I regret is not in the Grierson anthology. It is a good poem, but I choose it particularly because it suggests very strongly the influence of Donne. It is called "Prayer."

Prayer, the Church's banquet, Angels' age,
  God's breath in man returning to his birth,
The soul in paraphrase, heart in pilgrimage,
  The Christian plummet sounding heaven and earth;

Engine against the Almighty, sinner's tower,
   Reversèd thunder, Christ-side-piercing spear,
The six-days-world transposing in an hour,
   A kind of tune which all things hear and fear;

Softness, and peace, and joy, and love, and bliss,
   Exalted manna, gladness of the best,
Heaven in ordinary, man well drest,
   The milky way, the bird of Paradise,

Church bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices, something understood.[21]

[Now I must warn you that it is very difficult for all of us to judge the merit of religious and devotional poetry. It may just strike our own religious sensibility, and then we may overrate it; and on the other hand people sometimes say: "I have no religious feeling myself, so I can't read this sort of poetry." Or, even if they are religious, a poem may not be adapted to their own particular religious atmosphere, and so they may reject it. I am inclined to believe myself that in fact, if not in theory, one does get more out of a religious poem if one has some religious faith; just as we probably get less out of a love poem if we have never been in love; but this must not blind us to the fact that a poem is primarily a poem. Just as it is not the primary purpose of a love poem to make us fall in love, so it is not the primary purpose of a religious poem to make us worship. Love or religion is the material, and we must see what the poet makes of it.]

I hope you remember what I said about the *conceit*, as a figure of speech used by Donne, in comparison with the strictly useful similes and metaphors used by poets like Dante and Shakespeare.[22] The conceit is used for its own sake, and for the intellectual pleasure of far-fetched comparisons. The intellectual pleasure in this ingenuity is what was called "wit," and in the second-rate poets of this school, some of whom I shall quote later, it remains merely wit, and seldom becomes poetry. In the real poets, on the other hand, what happens is not simply that poetry is added to wit, but the wit turns into poetry. Now, let us look at the poem I have just quoted by Herbert. It is a succession of brief conceits. We may observe that by Donne alone, with his superior mental power and dialectic skill, is one conceit ever developed successfully at length, as in "A Valediction." The other poets incline to pass quickly from one conceit to another. In Herbert's poem we find a very rapid succession indeed, some of which when isolated sound like wit but not like poetry: "the soul in paraphrase," "reversed thunder," "heaven in ordinary," figures which I think suggest Donne strongly. Yet the poem as a whole *is* a poem, and the last two lines are so fine as to reflect a glory on what precedes:

Church bells beyond the stars heard, the soul's blood,
The land of spices, something understood.

lines which have some of the magic of Keats's magic casements.[23]

[Herbert is not always so elaborate as this. The poem "Redemption" (page 103) with that fine line "At length I heard a ragged noise and mirth" is rather a bit of allegory. But the interesting point about Herbert is that he usually gets an effect of extreme simplicity. It is a deceptive simplicity, largely due to using simple and common words skillfully. Look at "The Collar" (page 111). It is exquisitely toned to simple speech of just the right accent of solemnity. But analyse it a little, and the figures of speech do not look so simple.

  Shall I be still in suit?
Have I no harvest but a thorn
To let me blood, and not restore
What I have lost with cordial fruit?

and the effect of simplicity is largely due to the impressiveness of the last two lines

Methoughts I heard one calling, *Child*:
And I replied, *My Lord*.

The beautiful poem "Discipline" (page 113) is really simpler, but still not as simple as it looks. And everywhere one comes across echoes of Donne. I will quote a few lines from various poems.

  What though my body run to dust?
Faith cleaves unto it, counting every grain
With an exact and most particular trust,

  My God, what is a heart?
  Silver, or gold, or precious stone,
  Or star, or rainbow, or a part
Of all these things, or all of them in one?

That flesh is but the glass which holds the dust
That measures all our time;

But man is close, reserved, and dark to Thee;
When Thou demandest but a heart,
He cavils instantly:
In his poor cabinet of bone
Sins have their box apart,
Defrauding Thee, Who gavest two for one.][24]

But Herbert is by no means merely a minor follower of Donne. He inherits and practises Donne's skill in conversational tone, and the effect of simplicity which he gives is evidence rather of a personal genius for simplification. And if I set myself to imitate either, I think that Herbert might be the more difficult model of the two. There remains his personal quality, and the necessity for saturating oneself in his verse to get it.

[I have left myself but little time tonight to talk of Crashaw, and I fear I must postpone Vaughan till next week. But Crashaw I must speak of at once, because] Crashaw is in appearance the greatest contrast to Herbert. Where Herbert seems simple and austere, Crashaw seems almost vulgarly opulent and decorated. Yet the difference is not so great as might appear. The great difference is this: that Crashaw absorbed many more, and more direct, continental influences than Herbert: he is definitely baroque.[25] The strange thing is that the finest baroque poetry should have been written by an Englishman in English, in a country outside of the direct current.

[Richard Crashaw's father was an eminent theologian of the Church of England. He collected a large library, which contained a great many contemporary foreign books; for William Crashaw was active in controversy against Rome, and kept himself well read in Roman literature. Richard became attached to his university of Cambridge, and was a fellow of Peterhouse when the civil wars broke out. He fled to France after the execution of the King, and attended the court of Queen Henrietta Maria, who was of course herself a Roman Catholic. At some time during these years he became a convert; we only know that through the exiled Queen he obtained introductions to ecclesiastics in Italy. For the rest of his short life he remained an exile, and knew no prosperity; and he died at Loreto many years before the Restoration.][26]

Crashaw is more complicated than Herbert. Donne had undergone foreign influences, Herbert only through Donne. But Crashaw had the experience of Donne, and at the same time was exposed, more directly than Donne himself, to foreign literary influences. However complicated Herbert's poetic technique is, his type of religious feeling is easy for the English mind, whether Anglican or Dissenting. But in Crashaw we encounter a fine English poet who is at the same time a little alien. Herbert's plain moralising, or direct address to Our Lord, is very different from Crashaw's elaborate invocation of the saints. Crashaw is soaked in the Counter-Reformation. Let us plunge in and take him first at his worst. This is from a poem called "The Tear" – that is, a tear in the eye of Our Lady:

What bright soft thing is this?
Sweet Mary, thy fair eyes' expense?
A moist spark it is,
A watery diamond; from whence
The very term, I think, was found
The water of a diamond.

A kind of pun, you see, in the first stanza. He develops antithesis, in the manner of Donne: Stanza II. begins "O 'tis not a tear . . ." Stanza III.: "O 'tis a tear . . ." and the climax of absurdity is the sixth:

Fair drop, why quakst thou so?
Cause thou straight must lay thy head
In the dust? O no;
The dust shall never be thy bed:
A pillow for thee will I bring,
Stuffed with down of angel's wing.[27]

This is the very extremity of the conceit; Crashaw not only outdoes Donne, but even his Italian and Latin models: who else would provide a pillow stuffed with angel's down for the head of a tear? But now take a poem called "The Weeper" (page 130), on St. Mary Magdalen, a subject who fascinated the poets, and some of the painters, of the baroque period.[28] Here, wit and tortuous ingenuity becomes poetry. Crashaw is a difficult poet for my purpose, because all his best poems are too long to read in full; but I can pick out a few stanzas of "The Weeper":

Not in the evening's eyes
When they red with weeping are
For the sun that dies,

Sits sorrow with a face so fair,
Nowhere but here did ever meet
Sweetness so sad, sadness so sweet.

The dew no more will weep
The primrose's pale cheek to deck,
The dew no more will sleep
Nuzzled in the lily's neck;
Much rather would it be thy Tear,
And leave them both to tremble here.

Golden though he be,
Golden Tagus murmurs though;
Were his way by thee,
Content and quiet he would go.
So much more rich would he esteem
Thy silver, than his golden stream.[29]

If you read the whole poem through, it must remind you of Shelley's "Skylark," in its melody, and apparently in its succession of images. But if you look at the "Skylark" you will see that Shelley's images are a straight succession of plain similes, with none of the delight in intellectual ingenuity – such as the figure of the evening's eyes being red with weeping for the dying sun – which, when combined with emotional intensity, gives the peculiar character of this poetry of the first half of the seventeenth century.[30]

[Before quitting the company of this great poet, whom I have talked of with inexcusable brevity, I will ask you to read three things. Read the "Hymn to St. Theresa" (page 137 in Grierson), and then read if you can, St. Theresa's marvellous autobiography in any translation you can get.[31] And read on page 193 a poem on "The Death of Mr. Crashaw," written by a young man who came up to Peterhouse College while Crashaw was still in residence there: Abraham Cowley, of whom we shall hear more later.[32] Cowley wrote many fine things; but Crashaw is fortunate in having for an epitaph two lines in which truth, "wit" and poetry are one:

Poet and Saint! To thee alone are given
The two most sacred names of earth and heaven.

In his famous exequy upon Keats, Shelley said "Go thou to Rome . . ."[33] To understand Crashaw it is still more necessary to go to Rome, not only because Rome is Roman, but because Rome is so much more seventeenth century than any other city.[34] There the painters and the architects did in oil and stone what Crashaw did in ink. And on the other hand, I think it is a perpetual study of interest and delight to observe the family likeness in the wide differences, in the poetry of Donne, Herbert, and Crashaw. We have to look next at further likenesses in dissimilarity, with Vaughan, Traherne, Marvell, King and Milton; then, if we can, at Carew, Lovelace, Suckling and the minor metaphysicals and Cowley; we come to a resolution of this fantastic century in Dryden.][35]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 8.30 p.m. on Friday 21 Mar as TSE's third talk in a series of six weekly lectures on seventeenth-century literature. Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets. TSE's outline for these talks is presented in "Syllabus for a Course of Six Talks on Seventeenth Century Poetry" (*L4* 449-51).

2. Rupert Brooke praised Donne for his "sincerity": "[Donne] heralded, and in some part led, this age, when English literature climbed and balanced briefly on the difficult pinnacle of sincerity . . . one can never doubt his sincerity" ("John Donne, the Elizabethan," *Nation*, 17, 15 Feb 1913, 825-26). In his previous broadcast talk in this series, TSE remarked: "We are not to believe that sincerity in poetry is the same as, or is due to, sincerity about the facts of the poet's life" (4.65).

3. TSE follows Herbert Grierson in emphasizing Donne's affinities with Browning: "[it is] only in Browning that one will find the same simplicity of feeling combined with a like swift and subtle dialectic." *The Poems of John Donne*, vol 2 (London: Oxford UP, 1912), xliii.

4. In *Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden* (1619), Jonson is reported to have said "that Done for not keeping of accent deserved hanging"; in "A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (1693) Dryden asked: "Wou'd not *Donn*'s Satires, which abound with so much Wit, appear more Charming, if he had taken care of his Words, and of his Numbers?"; and in his *Lives* Johnson disparaged Donne and the metaphysical poets: "instead of writing of poetry they only wrote verses, and very often such verses as stood the trial of the finger better than of the ear; for the modulation was so imperfect that they were only found to be verses by counting the syllables." *John Donne: The Critical Heritage*, ed. A. J. Smith. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1975, 69, 151-52, 217.

5. TSE was indebted to Pierre Legouis's pioneering study, *Donne the Craftsman: An Essay upon the Structure of the Songs and Sonets* (London: Oxford UP, 1928), which contended: "Though Donne never attempted anything quite so ambitious [as the Spenserian stanza], the *Songs and Sonets* contain stanzas, not only of eleven and twelve, but also of thirteen and fourteen lines. . . . All the longer and more complex stanzas, it would seem, are of Donne's invention" (17, 23).

6*. TSE's note: "The references are to Grierson's *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century from Donne to Butler*. Oxford University Press. 6s." TSE modernizes the spelling of Grierson's edition (hereafter abbreviated *MLP*) for the readers of the *Listener*. For an explication of this stanza from "The Funerall," see his fourth Clark lecture (2:672-73).

7. Final stanza of "A nocturnall upon S. Lucies day, Being the shortest day" (1633).

8. "A Valediction: forbidding mourning" (1633), stanza 2. For TSE's discussion of this poem, see his fourth Clark lecture (2:677-79).

9. "The Extasie" (1633), ll. 17-20. In his third Clark lecture, TSE remarks of these lines: "This stanza has always seemed to me particularly felicitous. Nothing could be more happy than the use of the word 'negotiate,' or the image of the effigies on a tomb, 'sepulchrall statues'; while the 'All day' beginning the third line, echoed by 'all the day' at the end of the fourth, is a real *trouvaille* or euphony which goes to make one of the most perfect quatrains in this form that I have ever met" (2:657).

10. TSE echoes Legouis who in *Donne the Craftsman* argued that emphasis on Donne's "intensity of feeling, originality and subtlety of thought" had led to an "incomplete and unconsciously biased" view of the poetry (5). Instead, Legouis directed attention to "the quality of the art, or craftsmanship, or technique" (11).

11. "Mais, Degas, ce n'est point avec des idées que l'on fait des vers. *C'est avec des mots*." Quoted by Paul Valéry, *Degas, danse, dessin* [*Degas, Dance, Drawing*] (Paris: Gallimard, 1983, 92).

12*. TSE's note: "*The Complete Verse* [sic] *and Selected Prose of John Donne*, Nonesuch Press, 7s. 6d. *The Poems of John Donne*, edited by Professor Grierson. Oxford University Press, 6s."

13. Donne wrote two "Anniversaries" to commemorate Elizabeth Drury who died in 1610 at the age of fourteen.

14. "Of the Progresse of the Soule: The Second Anniversary" (1612), ll. 81-88, 243-46, 293-98. *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. John Hayward (London: Nonesuch Press, 1929), 217, 221, 222. TSE modernizes the spelling. The "Anniversaries" are discussed at length in his fifth Clark lecture (2:686).

15. In "A Note on Richard Crashaw" (1928), TSE observes: "I call Crashaw a 'devotional' poet, because the word 'religious' is so abused. . . . Devotional poetry is religious poetry which falls within an exact faith and has precise objects for contemplation" (3.382). On 20 June 1930, following the publication of *Ash-Wednesday*, TSE wrote to the Rev. William Force Stead to complain: "Some damned fool of a Cambridge paper referred to it as devotional poetry, which rather misses the point" (*L5* 222). TSE probably refers to a review of *Ash-Wednesday* titled "Eagle's Wings" in *The Granta* of 16 May 1930, in which the author ("J. D.") states that "the six poems in this volume constitute the finest religious poetry written in English since Crashaw" (419). If this is the source, TSE probably construes "religious" in J. D.'s usage to mean "devotional" in TSE's sense; see also *L5* 201.

16. "Holy Sonnet" (numbered 7 in Grierson's edition of Donne), one of nineteen published in 1633.

17. Donne was born between 24 Jan and 19 June 1572; Richard Crashaw was born in late 1612 or early 1613 (ODNB).

18. Grierson's anthology contains two poems by George Herbert's eldest brother, Edward, Lord Herbert of Cherbury (*MLP* 27-33). In 1623, James I gave the sinecure of Whitford rectory in Flintshire to Herbert, although he was a layman at the time. Izaak Walton's *Life of Mr. George Herbert* (1670) emphasizes the fact that Herbert turned to holy orders only after the failure of his courtly ambitions.

19. Walton concludes his *Life*: "Thus he liv'd, and thus he dy'd like a Saint." *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert and Robert Sanderson* (London: Oxford UP, 1927), 319.

20. Herbert was rector of the parish of Bemerton, near Salisbury, from Apr 1630 until his death in 1633.

21. *The Poems of George Herbert*, ed. Arthur Waugh (London: Oxford UP, 1907), 51-52. TSE modernizes the spelling of all quotations from this World's Classics edition which he owned.

22. For TSE's earlier comparison in this broadcast series of the metaphysical conceit with the figurative language of Dante and Shakespeare, see "Rhyme and Reason" (4.63).

23. "Ode to a Nightingale" (1819), ll. 69-70: "magic casements, opening on the foam / Of perilous seas, in faery lands forlorn."

24. "Faith," ll. 41-43; "Mattens," ll. 5-8; "Church Monuments," ll. 20-21; "Ungratefulnesse," ll. 25-30 (1633). *The Poems of George Herbert*, 51, 62, 65, 83.

25. TSE read a detailed examination of the influence of Latin and Italian poetry on Crashaw in Mario Praz's *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* (1925). In "A Note on Richard Crashaw" (1928), TSE remarked: "Mr. Mario Praz, who has probably read more than anybody of the Latin poetry and the continental poetry of the seventeenth century, puts Crashaw above Marino, Góngora, and everybody else, merely as the *representative* of the baroque spirit in literature" (3.383).

26. Crashaw fled from Cambridge to Leiden in the Netherlands but was settled in Paris in 1645, by which time he had converted to Roman Catholicism. He died in Loreto, Italy, in 1648 (ODNB).

27. "The Teare" (1646), *The Poems, English, Latin and Greek, of Richard Crashaw*, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 84-85. TSE modernizes the spelling from Martin's edition, which he owned. In his sixth Clark lecture, TSE quotes these lines and concludes: "One cannot conceive the state of mind of a writer who could pen such monstrosities" (2:711).

28. In *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra*, Praz contends: "Ma, oltre alla Maddalena, tutta una costellazione di sante e di beate occupò il cielo cattolico" [But, besides Mary Magdalen, a whole constellation of female saints and blessed filled the Catholic sky] (Firenze: La voce, 1925, 148). In *The Flaming Heart*, Praz recast this sentence: "Mary Magdalen was only the supreme star in a constellation of female saints which dominated the summer sky of Baroque religion" (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1966), 205.

29. "Saint Mary Magdalene, or The Weeper" (1646), stanzas 6, 8, and 13 (*MLP* 131, 132, 133).

30. In "A Note on Richard Crashaw," TSE compares Crashaw's "The Weeper" and Shelley's "To a Skylark" at length (3.380). On 12 Dec 1929, TSE wrote to C. K. Scott Moncrieff to say he maintained that Shelley's "ode is a bad poem and won't stand analysis. And nobody stopped to think whether poor Crashaw is a great poet or not. And I do prefer Crashaw to Shelley, for myself!" (*L4* 704). In *Seven Types of Ambiguity*, William Empson noted that TSE's criticism of Shelley's poem "has received much discussion lately" (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930), 156.

31. In his sixth Clark lecture, TSE contends: "Theresa's autobiography is almost essential to any understanding of Crashaw. It is not only a very interesting book, but a really great book; it is great because of the real beauty of character, and the transparent honesty and scrupulousness and piety of the writer" (2:707).

32. *Read*: "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw." Cowley was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, when Crashaw was a Fellow at Peterhouse.

33. TSE refers to stanza 49 of Shelley's elegy "Adonais" (1821): "Go thou to Rome, – at once the Paradise, / The grave, the city, and the wilderness."

34. TSE observes of Crashaw in his sixth Clark lecture: "Had he lived today he could only have dwelt in Florence or in Rome" (2:715).

35. The final three talks in this series are "Mystic and Politician as Poet: Vaughan, Traherne, Marvell, Milton"; "The Minor Metaphysicals: From Cowley to Dryden"; and "John Dryden."

To the Editor of *The Bookman*[1]

Sir, – It is not often that I feel obliged to reply to criticism of my own work. If one tried to correct every misunderstanding, one would have no time for anything else. But in reading your "Chronicle and Comment" for March 1930, I find what is to me a more serious matter: a travesty, as I take it, of my attitude to one of the greatest men of our time; so I ask you, as an act of justice, to print my own comments. The matter is all the more serious because your "Chronicle and Comments" is unsigned, and therefore bears, at least, editorial approval.[2]

There is much in this commentary with which I agree; and so far as you criticise or censure my own writings I am indifferent. What I resent is your suggestion that I "cast scorn" on a man for whom I "profess the highest admiration" [77].[3] I overlook the suggestion of insincerity. Again it is suggested that my purpose is to "ridicule" [77] Mr. Babbitt; and again that my intention may be to do him what damage I can. This is, I submit, a grave misrepresentation.

Again, your critic says that I write about Babbitt "considerably more sharply" than I have written about anyone towards whom I feel "open enmity" [78]. I take exception to the suggestion that I feel open enmity towards anybody. I do not expect your critic to have read all of my hurried journalistic writing. But he should not generalise as if he had. Towards whom have I professed "open enmity?" Not even towards Mr. Shaw or Mr. Wells, whom I regard merely as objects for the paleontologist.[4] If towards anybody, towards such men as Mr. Bertrand Russell and Mr. Middleton Murry, about whose various doctrines I have written far more "sharply" than about those of Mr. Babbitt; but for whom, nevertheless, I have a warm personal feeling.

Your critic also makes capital out of the fact that I display for Charles Maurras "nothing but the greatest respect and affection," whereas I treat Babbitt with "patronising admiration and easy ridicule" [78].[5] My personal acquaintance with M. Maurras is but slight; my acquaintance with Mr. Babbitt is of many years. Your critic quite overlooks the circumstances: that when I have spoken of Maurras it has been to defend him against what I believed to be injustice, whilst Mr. Babbitt, I am very glad to say, needs no such defence. I do not consider that any parallel can be drawn between my attitude towards Maurras and my attitude towards Babbitt; and I should be the first to admit that there are far grosser positive errors and far greater dangers in the doctrine of Maurras than in that of Babbitt.[6] If indeed there is any patronage about, your critic is responsible for some: he refers to my "usual brightness" and "grave jests" [76] et caetera.

May I state that for the teaching of Babbitt himself I have the greatest admiration; and to Mr. Babbitt the deepest gratitude. My own position seems to me to be very close indeed to that of Mr. More; for example as put in his admirable essay in your same number.[7] What differences there are between Mr. More and myself are all on our own side of the fence, do not concern the general issues of humanism, and would appear to most humanists to be trivial theological details.

My chief apprehension about "humanism" has been lest the teaching of Mr. Babbitt should be transformed, by a host of zealous disciples, into the hard and fast dogma of a new ethical church, or something between a church and a political party. If that is to happen, I confess that I prefer the subtle psychologising of Mr. Ramon Fernandez, a study of which I recommend to all American humanists, to the vague moralising of some of Mr. Babbitt's disciples.[8]

On one point however I must say that your critic is near the truth. I do certainly associate the contemporary use of the word "humanism" with that of T. E. Hulme. Hulme's use of the term is traditional and just; and if our new humanists mean something entirely different then they should call it by some other name.[9]

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
[T. S. Eliot]

NOTES

1. Unpublished: carbon (Princeton), dated 31 Mar 1930; see *L5* 132-35. On 5 Apr 1930, TSE explained to Paul Elmer More: "I was pretty well incensed by the editorial commentary in that number [Mar 1930], which you must have seen, as it contains your essay: and I enclose you the (only) copy of a letter which I have addressed to the Editor. If they choose not to print it, I should at least like some friend to know how I feel about the matter" (*L5* 135). On 14 Apr, TSE repeated this complaint to Norman Foerster: "I was very much incensed . . . by the *Bookman*'s recent editorial interpretation of my attitude towards Babbitt" (*L5* 146). After receiving a conciliatory letter from Seward Collins, editor of the *Bookman*, TSE replied on 24

Apr: "I am sorry if I misunderstood your comments in the *Bookman* but perhaps it is as well from my point of view if you will publish my letter, as possibly other people may have come to the same conclusion that I came to myself. I daresay that there is an ambiguity in my writings about Mr. Babbitt; but after all my position I feel is very close to that of Mr. More in the same number in which you wrote your comment" (*L5* 159). Regarding Collins's editorial, on 8 Aug, TSE told Allen Tate: "It seemed to me that Collins was virtually accusing me of dishonest behaviour towards Babbitt. I wrote a long and angry letter to which Collins replied very civilly promising to print; but so far he does not seem to have done so" (*L5* 280).

TSE's letter was not printed, possibly because the *Bookman* did not usually carry correspondence. Extracts from it were later published by Roger Kojecký in *T. S. Eliot's Social Criticism* (London: Faber, 1971), 67, 74-75 and by B. A. Harries in "A Correspondence between T. S. Eliot and P. E. More." *Theology*, 75 (Mar 1972), 137-39.

2. "Chronicle and Comment," *The Bookman*, 71 (Mar 1930), 65-80, unsigned editorial by Seward Collins.

3. The relevant passage reads: "After an interval of ten years Eliot returned to the subject of Babbitt and devoted three of his infrequent essays largely to casting scorn on a man from whom he professes the highest admiration and to whom he acknowledges a large debt" (77).

4. In 1927, TSE remarked: "another generation has come and gone – the *literary* generation which includes Mr. Bernard Shaw, and Mr. Wells, and Mr. Lytton Strachey" (3.71).

5. The full passage reads: "It is doubtful if Eliot agrees with as many of Maurras's secular opinions as of Babbitt's; it is certain that Maurras has expressed a more contemptuous attitude toward orthodox Christianity than has Babbitt; yet for the one Eliot displays nothing but the greatest respect and affection, for the other patronizing admiration and easy ridicule" (78).

6. In "The *Action Française*, M. Maurras and Mr. Ward" (1928), TSE defended Maurras in the *Criterion* against Leo Ward's *The Condemnation of the Action Française* (1928) written in support of Pope Pius XI's official condemnation of Maurras and the Action Française on 29 Dec 1926. In "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (1928) (3.369), TSE remarked that Babbitt's "influence might thus join with that of another philosopher – Charles Maurras – and might, indeed, correct some of the extravagances of that writer" (3.461). In *Masters of Modern French Criticism*, Babbitt offers qualified approval of Maurras for his active defence of "classicism against modern laxity and corruption of taste" (London: Constable, 1912), 408.

7. In "A Revival of Humanism," More argues for the necessity of Christian religion in the fulfilment of humanism: "Will not the humanist, unless he adds to his creed the faith and the hope of religion, find himself at the last, despite his protests, dragged back into the camp of the naturalist?" (*Bookman*, Mar 1930), 9. On 5 Apr, TSE wrote to More to express his support for this point of view: "I liked your essay in the same review extremely . . . it seemed to me that you said what I should have liked to have said myself" (*L5* 135).

8. TSE translated Ramon Fernandez's essay "A Humanist Theory of Value" for the *Criterion* (Jan 1930), 228-45.

9. In "Chronicle and Comment" the editor of the *Bookman* wonders whether TSE was "being misled by the late T. E. Hulme's use of the word [humanism]" (78), adding: "Hulme

identified humanism with the Renaissance and the modern consequences . . . But the present humanistic movement is largely opposed to the final results of the Renaissance" (79). Hulme discusses humanism in his notes "Humanism and the Religious Attitude" posthumously collected in *Speculations* (1924). Quoting from this essay in "Mr. P. E. More's Essays" (1929), TSE remarked that "Hulme outlined in a few rough notes a philosophy very similar to that of Mr. More and Mr. Babbitt" (3.587).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 9 (Apr 1930), 381-85

A NATIONAL THEATRE

Matthew Arnold, in one of the most popular of his essays, expounded with great skill and persuasion the advantage of the French in the possession of an Academy of Letters, but concluded that the English would never get such an institution, and perhaps ought not to wish for it.[1] The persistent project of a National Theatre in England suggests somewhat similar reflections. If we get it, will it be anything like the Comédie Française; and even if it is, ought we to want it?[2]

The time to express a positive opinion has not yet arrived. A great deal more discussion is desirable first. Mr. Bernard Shaw's contributions to the subject have been rather frothy, Mr. Granville Barker's more serious.[3] But so far we have not seen any detailed discussion by anyone who does *not* want a National Theatre; only a few hints from persons who believe that such a venture would be too costly; and that consideration is only likely to fire the zeal of the enthusiasts. In such an affair there are ordinarily only two classes of people: the few who are enthusiastic for it and the vast majority who are quite indifferent. If it is a pity that such a grand scheme should fail through public indifference, it would be equally a pity if it succeeded for the same reason: the caprice of a few millionaires might suddenly saddle us with an expensive public luxury worth exactly nothing.

We should like to see a tentative repertoire proposed by some qualified supporter of the scheme. Will the National Theatre give us more or better Shakespeare than the Old Vic?[4] Will it produce *Troilus* or *Pericles*? Will it take up again the work of the Phoenix Society, and will it do any of the work of the Stage Society?[5] If it is useful, will it not be unpopular, and if it is popular will it not be useless? A periodic rotation of Shaw, Galsworthy, Barrie, the more popular plays of Shakespeare and an occasional performance of *The Way of the World*, with *Peter Pan* and *The Second Shepherds' Play* at Christmas.[6] Will all the plays be Empire Produce, or on the other hand shall we be deluged with the accomplished drama of Central Europe?

It is not too difficult to conceive an interesting National Theatre, but it is much more easy to conceive a hopelessly dull one. The difficulty of selecting a repertoire out of the great number of fine but mostly imperfect plays of the English seventeenth century is much greater than the task of selection of French plays for the French stage; particularly if public opinion has to be reckoned with. We should not expect the National Theatre to sink quite to the level of the Royal Academy, because the British can recognize their good dramatists more readily than they can detect their good artists; but Mr. Shaw will have much ado to convince us that a National Theatre will be any more useful for the advancement of British drama than the Academy for the advancement of British painting.[7]

CENSORSHIP AND BLASPHEMY

On the subject of the "censorship" of literature – we must continue to employ this useful word, although, as Lord Brentford has reminded us, there is no "censorship" – *The Criterion* has pursued the middle path.[8] We have no wish to see the Home Office powers in relation to genuine pornography abolished; and unless these powers were a little too wide, in black and white, they would probably be no power at all. We only object, and shall continue to object, to the inclusion of particular works in this category; and we were and are alarmed by the ability of the popular press to draw attention to books in such a way that the Home Office is obliged to take action.[9] We should like it to be impossible for an editor or a writer to use the public press to call attention to any work which he professes to consider to be deserving of suppression.

The recent discussions about the law of blasphemy illustrate some similar errors of fanaticism in the errors of both sides in the previous censorship discussions. Nowadays the real Puritans, or their lineal descendents, are mostly desirous that this law should be abolished. In the reports that we have read of the debates in the Commons, we have not seen much reference to the question whether the actual law had, within living memory, been grossly abused.[10] The attacks upon it were mostly made from the assumption that the law is obsolete. They ignore the obvious practical distinction between allowing a law to be a dead letter – and repealing it. To repeal is not merely to erase: it is to put a new idea into people's heads. To abolish all restrictions on pornographic literature would be in effect to encourage pornography rather than to encourage literature. And in committing ourselves to this statement we have not forgotten one great work of English literature which Englishmen are prevented from importing into England, and for the circulation of which we have stood out from the beginning.[11] Similarly, to repeal the law of blasphemy would be to encourage blasphemy.

No doubt, many of the persons who have fought against the censorship of books are enlisted against the blasphemy law; but no doubt there are enrolled also against the blasphemy law many people who are either indifferent to literary censorship or who positively approve the present state of things. The former group of people are at least consistent; but the others should be made to understand that if there are to be no restrictions upon blasphemy, then the case for any censorship or police supervision of "obscenity" is very much weakened.

CENSORSHIP AND THE FILMS

A cognate question is raised by a letter from Bernard Shaw in *The Times* of February 17th. If the facts about the suppression of the film in question are exactly as Mr. Shaw states – and we have no ground for doubting them, and in *The Times* of the next few days saw no adequate rejoinder – then we feel as strongly about this particular instance as Mr. Shaw does.[12] But it is not clear from Mr. Shaw's letter whether his objection is to the actual working of the film censorship, or to the existence of *any* film censorship. He points out that some films have been publicly advertised and exhibited to which he himself takes strong objection on moral grounds; and we do not doubt that we should be impressed by the same films in the same way. But he ought to agree that an intelligent censorship would be a good thing. And this is precisely the question which has never been thoroughly discussed: whether an intelligent censorship is possible; and, if not, whether the effects of a stupid censorship are any worse than those of no censorship at all. On the one side are ranged all the old English Radicals – sometimes "Socialists" in name, but more Radicals in spirit – for whom Freedom, for anything and from anything, is an innate idea; and on the other side the timorous folk who defend, or accept, the actual state of things because the only alternative generally presented to them seems very much worse.

OF FREEDOM IN GENERAL

To revert to the first paragraph of this commentary, the people who are anxious to repeal every law which appears obsolete, may not always turn out to be the intimate friends of Freedom that they appear to be. Freedom can only exist in a kind of balance; it is always threatened, not from one side but from both sides. The advocates of liberty, and of what in popular jargon is called the New Morality, who are so anxious that theory should be brought to square with practice, and that all humbug and hypocrisy should be swept clean away, are always likely to erect a new theory founded upon their own practice, which may be decidedly more restrictive of freedom than the old one.[13] Freedom does not flourish in an ambiance of fanaticism. Nor is it always furthered by the passion, popular among some of the community at the present time, for *legalising* everything, which is merely tearing down old fences which had happily some holes in them, and building new barriers topped with broken glass and charged with electricity. The most conspicuous and most monstrous recent example of humanitarian tyranny is the Canal Boat Bill, a measure which in the name of health and education would destroy the family life of its victims.[14] Such are the fruits of Liberty.

NOTES

1. In "The Literary Influence of the Academies" (1864), Matthew Arnold concluded that "an academy quite like the French Academy, a recognised organ of the highest literary opinion, a recognised authority in matters of intellectual tone and taste, we shall hardly have, and perhaps we ought not to wish to have it." *The Works of Matthew Arnold*, vol 3 (London: Macmillan, 1903), 85.

2. The Comédie-Française, founded by Louis XIV in 1680, is one of the national theaters in France. Matthew Arnold was converted to the cause of a National Theatre after seeing a performance of the Comédie-Française in 1879. In his essay "The French Play in London" (1879), Arnold called for a state-sponsored English theater: "*The theatre is irresistible; organise the theatre*" (*The Works of Matthew Arnold*, vol 11, 1904), 228.

3. Shaw was an enthusiastic supporter of proposals for a National Gallery and spoke in this cause at Kingsway Hall, London, on 31 Jan; TSE read a report of Shaw's speech in the *Times* on 1 Feb. An article by Harley Granville Barker (1877-1946), theater director and playwright, supporting the creation of a National Theatre appeared in the *Times* on 10 Feb. In 1903, Barker conceived with William Archer *A Scheme and Estimates for a National Theatre* (published in 1907), which outlined practical issues needed to establish such a theater. Archer and Barker estimated the project would require £330,000. A committee was formed to raise the necessary money, but a National Theatre Act was not passed by Parliament until 1949 and a National Theatre Company was not founded until 1963.

4. The Old Vic was founded in 1818; the Old Vic Company emphasized performances of Shakespeare in its repertoire for 1929 starring John Gielgud.

5. The Phoenix Society was organized in 1919 loosely under the auspices of the Incorporated Stage Society. The Stage Society was founded in 1899 and became significant in the movement for a National Theatre (2.103).

6. *The Way of the World* (1700) by William Congreve; *Peter Pan* (1904) by J. M. Barrie; *The Second Shepherds' Play* is a medieval mystery play in the Wakefield Cycle.

7. The Royal Academy of Arts, founded by George III in 1768, was frequently attacked in the early twentieth century for its perceived lack of support for avant-garde artists.

8. TSE had criticized Sir William Joynson-Hicks, Lord Brentford, for his censorship of books in his Commentary for Oct 1929 where he states: "Lord Brentford reminds us of what we already know, there is no 'censorship' of books". Joynson-Hicks's pamphlet *Do We Need a Censor?* was published by Faber & Faber in the Criterion Miscellany series in 1929 (3.746).

9. TSE had been angered by the campaign conducted by James Douglas in the *Sunday Express* against Radclyffe Hall's lesbian novel *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) and had defended it against censorship in "A Commentary" for Oct 1929 (3.746).

10. In 1921, John William Gott was sentenced to nine months' hard labor for publishing pamphlets satirizing Jesus. The Abuse and Vilification (religious invective) Order No. 43 of 1929 stated: "Any person who utters a word or sound in public or within earshot of any other person that may be or is intended to offend his religious sensitivities or faith can expect to be found guilty and eligible for a one-year jail sentence."

11. Writing in the *Dial* for Nov 1923, TSE called James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) a "very great book" (2.496). During the early 1930s, TSE discussed with Joyce the possibility of publishing a Faber edition of *Ulysses* (2.476).

12. In the *Times* of 17 Feb, Shaw wrote to complain about the refusal of a license for a film, *The Night Patrol*, depicting the evils of the "White Slave traffic" in domestic servants in London (15). A reply by Charles L. Attenborough on 19 Feb pointed out that, in exceptional circumstances, County Council Licensing Committees were able to override the decisions of the Board of Censors (15).

13. A recent study *The New Morality* (1928) by the American philosopher Durant Drake was highly critical of the "new morality" that had emerged among the younger generation since World War I.

14. Following a government report on the education of canal boat children, the Canal Boat Bill of 1929 proposed granting powers to take these children into public care.

In Memoriam [Moncrieff, Lawrence, Whibley]

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 9 (Apr 1930): unsigned loose leaf insert

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At the last moment of preparation for press, we learn almost simultaneously of the death of three distinguished contributors to *The Criterion*: C. K. SCOTT-MONCRIEFF, D. H. LAWRENCE and CHARLES WHIBLEY.[1] There is neither time nor space to commemorate them further in this number. Editorial comment must be impersonal. We can only say for the moment, now, that each of these men represented something for which *The Criterion* stands; and that each in his kind and degree and way helped *The Criterion*; and that the loss to this periodical is very grievous.[2]

NOTES

1. C. K. M. Scott Moncrieff died in Rome on 28 Feb; D. H. Lawrence in Vence, France, on 2 Mar; Charles Whibley died in Hyères, France, on 4 Mar. On 19 Mar, TSE commissioned an obituary article on Whibley for the *Criterion* from Sir James Barrie "because I personally want to do adequate honour to Whibley's memory." When Barrie declined, TSE commissioned an obituary from F. S. Oliver, but it did not appear. F. R. Leavis wrongly asserted that Lawrence received "no obituary notice in *The Criterion*" (*D. H. Lawrence: Novelist*, London: Chatto & Windus 1955), 11.

2. Moncrieff contributed a translation of Proust and a short story, Lawrence contributed five stories and travel sketches, and Whibley two essays, an obituary notice, and a book review to the *Criterion*. In 1928, Whibley acted as one the *Criterion*'s financial guarantors, pledging £25 per annum. Whibley and Moncrieff were subscribers to the *Criterion*. By contrast, on 7 Feb 1929, Lawrence referred to the *Criterion* as "that expensive and stewed T. S. Eliot quarterly" (*Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol 7, ed. Keith Sagar and James T. Boulton, Cambridge UP, 1993) 170.

Mystic and Politician as Poet: Vaughan, Traherne, Marvell, Milton[1]

The Listener, 3 (2 Apr 1930) 590-91

[I am sorry that it is impossible to read you any of Crashaw's poems in full. But, as I said, the best of them are too long; my talk would become simply a poetry reading. So I will suggest that you read his "Hymn to St. Theresa" (137 in Grierson); and then try to get hold of a translation of the autobiography of that amazing woman; and then read the poem again.[2] And finally, on page 193 read a poem "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw," written by a young man who came up to Peterhouse College while Crashaw was still there; one who also followed the Court into exile, and of whom we shall hear more: Abraham Cowley. Cowley wrote many fine lines; he was not a great poet; but no one could desire a finer epitaph than the lines on Crashaw beginning:

Poet and Saint! To thee alone are given
The two most sacred names of earth and heaven.][3]

Henry Vaughan is in some ways the most original and difficult of all the followers of Donne. Younger than any of the men I have yet mentioned, he was still old enough to have served in the King's army during the Civil Wars. He was a Welsh country gentleman of good family, but no courtier. His biography is a little vague, but he seems to have been distinguished by a passion for learned and curious studies, and by a passionate devotion to his native valleys. In fact, the odd title which he gave himself, "The Silurist," indicates a desire to identify himself as closely as possible with his native part of Wales.[4]

[I have said that he is in some ways the most original and difficult of all the disciples of Donne. One reason is that] His sensibility seems at times much nearer to that of the [nineteenth and] twentieth centur[ies]; he has a curious brooding love of nature which makes us think of Wordsworth, and a rather closer observation of wild nature. Donne is a poet of the town; Herbert is a poet of the vicarage; Crashaw is a poet of Rome; but Vaughan, with all his learning and culture, is a poet of the rugged countryside. The other peculiarity of Vaughan is that he comes much nearer than any of these men to being what we may call a mystic. Much of his poetry is religious, but is not of the Church; and here and there we seem to catch flashes of an original and unique vision; of personal mystical experience – perhaps not of the highest order, but still authentic. And on this side he suggests very faintly, William Blake; but without any of Blake's arrogant theorising.[5]

[Mr. Edmund Blunden, in a little book on Vaughan published two or three years ago by Cobden-Sanderson, dwells I think too much on the nature-loving side of Vaughan, and not enough either on his relation to the school of Donne or on his peculiar religious sensibility. But I recommend the book, and more particularly for the accomplishment with which Mr. Blunden has there translated Vaughan's Latin poems into English.][6]

Let us look at once at the poem which has perhaps done the most to distort our view of Vaughan into that of a mere precursor of Wordsworth, "The Retreat" (page 145):[7]* [(I will read only the first half of it).]

Happy those early days! when I
Shined in my Angel-infancy.
Before I understood this place
Appointed for my second race,
Or taught my soul to fancy ought
But a white, celestial thought,
When yet I had not walked above
A mile, or two, from my first love,
And looking back (at that short space)
Could see a glimpse of His bright face;
When on some gilded cloud, or flower
My gazing soul would dwell an hour,
And in those weaker glories spy
Some shadows of eternity . . .

This does suggest, of course, both Wordsworth's "Ode on Intimations of Immortality" and his primrose by the river's brim, his daffodils, etc.[8] But I think it represents something both different and more specific. It is not a general sense of what [Professor] Whitehead would call "pattern" in the life of nature, nor a love of nature for its own sake: I think it is a reference to some particular experience or experiences at some early period; just as I think that very different work, the "New Life" of Dante, also refers to a particular experience of childhood.[9] And remark also that although Vaughan uses Christian dogma very little, he was a pious Christian of the seventeenth century with definite unquestioned beliefs: the eternal life dimly revealed through nature is still the eternal life of Christianity; therefore, he never runs the risk of deifying nature itself; and there is no trace of the pantheism to which Wordsworth is exposed.[10]

I think we must see the love of nature and the trace of mysticism in Vaughan as one thing, remembering that his mysticism, so far as it goes, is Christian mysticism, and not the warm fog which passes for mysticism nowadays. His early poems are echoes of Donne; and to Donne he owes his start in life; but in his more mature work he develops a much more original imagery than does George Herbert. One of the frequent characteristics of Christian mysticism has been a use of various imageries of light and darkness, sometimes indeed of a light which is at the same time darkness; such imagery is used by John of the Cross, perhaps the greatest psychologist of all European mystics; it is used by Meister Eckhart and the German mystics. I do not know whether it has been remarked how many of Vaughan's images are light images.[11] He certainly did not borrow these from Donne. And very often Vaughan's are images of transient light: he is struck by the spark, the meteor, the glow-worm and the firefly:

stars nod, and sleep,
And through the dark air spin a fiery thread,
Such as doth gild the lazy glow-worm's bed.

What emanations,
Quick vibrations,
And bright stars are there!

One twinkling ray,
Shot o'er some cloud,
May clear much way . . .[12]

[He is fascinated by the nocturnal sky.

I saw eternity the other night
Like a great ring of pure and endless light . . .

They are all gone into the world of light! . . .

If a star
Should leave the sphere,
She must first mar

Her flaming wear,
And after fall . . .][13]

Vaughan is really the most various of all our metaphysical poets. The late W. P. Ker, who probably knew the whole of European poetry better than any man of his time, loved to produce a verse or stanza by one poet which might have been written by some other poet whom we have always thought utterly unlike. I remember his quoting a stanza of Crashaw which sounded like the very best Byron.[14] Vaughan is a capital source for this very salutary exercise: [The following is not one of his best, but]

And still a new succession sings and flies;
Fresh groves grow up, and their green branches shoot
Towards the old and still enduring skies,
While the low violet thrives at their root.[15]

Might you not think that this was by some eminent modern Georgian poet?[16] [and

The factor wind from far shall bring
The odours of the scattered spring,
And laden with the rich arrear
Spend it in spicy whispers there.[17]

If I had been asked to guess the author of this, I should have said that it was some imitator of a poet who lived long after Vaughan: that is Collins.[18] These exercises tend to correct our tendency to classify poets into periods and schools; and indeed the ones who are like each other are more unlike, and the ones who are unlike are more like, than we like to suppose.]

I could give you other quotations, however, which you would swear were by Donne, and others exactly George Herbert. But Vaughan is no mimic. I only mention these likenesses in order to isolate his essential originality. And I believe myself that in the following lines Vaughan is not merely making verses or boasting, but speaking of some insight in which he believes:

I summoned Nature: pierced through all her store;
Broke up some seals, which none had touched before,
Her womb, her bosom, and her head,
Where all her secrets lay abed,
I rifled quite; and having past

Through all the creatures, came at last
To search myself . . .[19]

[I believe that we cannot in criticism approach every poet from the same angle. I have chosen to speak of Vaughan from the point of view of content. He is not, like Donne, a great innovator in form who influenced the whole current of English poetry; he is interesting rather for what is personal to him and incommunicable to his successors. And I should like to point out that he is not a good anthology poet. You can get a good notion of Donne's shorter poems from the Grierson anthology; and a good notion of Herbert and Crashaw; but to make much of Vaughan you have to read through his poems, reading one in the light of another. He wrote hardly any poem which can be considered as perfect, or perfectly representative; but altogether he contributed something unique; and it can only increase our admiration for his model Donne, that Donne's innovations in form and language could stimulate such variety of content.

Before passing on to a poet of quite a different type, Andrew Marvell, I must say a few words about a minor poet who is the closest parallel to Vaughan.] There is no stranger case of literary reputation than that of Thomas Traherne. His publisher, the late Bertram Dobell, tells us how the manuscript was seen by chance exposed on a bookstall and purchased in 1897. So after 300 years this poet was first established; and to Mr. Dobell we owe both the poems and the companion volume of prose, called *Centuries of Meditations*.[20]

[I myself prefer Traherne's prose to his verse; though someone who is more intimate with his work than I am assures me that I am wrong.[21] But both his verse and his prose have had so much attention, partly no doubt because of their recent discovery, that I cannot pass Traherne without comment.] If you read one of his poems after another, straight ahead, you will get probably an impression of monotony, that he has little to say. I think that the real trouble it that he has too much to say; or, rather, that he has one thing to say which is all-important to him. He is more mystic than poet; Vaughan just preserves the balance where Traherne upsets it. He has not the richness and variety of imagery which poetry needs; and in his prose the matter and expression are much better adapted to each other. His chief inspiration is the same curious mystical experience of the world in childhood which had also touched Vaughan; he read deeply, but the rest of his life was a prolonged meditation over his experience. At his best, he has a flash of that inspired simplicity which we find in Blake:[22]

The streets were paved with golden stones,
  The boys and girls were mine,
  Oh how did all their lovely faces shine!
The sons of men were holy ones,
  In joy and beauty they appeared to me,
And everything which here I found,
  While like an angel I did see,
Adorned the ground.[23]

But Blake was, first, before he succumbed to the temptations of his own philosophising, a literary artist; and he never really loses his mastery over language. Blake's early verse shows an interesting, deliberate and masterly gradual adaptation of the diction of the eighteenth century to his own purposes. Traherne seems to me to remain a remarkable curiosity, an isolated specimen.[24]

There could be no greater contrast within the varied unity of Caroline poetry than that of Andrew Marvell with Henry Vaughan. Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan were all Royalists, though not all courtiers; the transition between Donne and Marvell represents the whole social and political revolution. Marvell was a Parliamentarian, a politician rather than a courtier. He was anything but a fanatical revolutionary or religious zealot, however; he was a man of culture and social position; and there is evidence that when the struggle came to a head, between King Charles and his Parliament, Marvell took sides unwillingly. Like Milton, he was for many years a hard-working servant of the public, and a member of the House of Commons. The town of Hull, which commemorated his tercentenary a few years ago, was blessed amongst constituencies by being represented by a man who was both a fine poet and an able, conscientious Parliamentarian.[25]

Marvell stands, to my mind, half-way between the more serious disciples of Donne, such as Herbert, Crashaw and Vaughan, and the lighter "courtly" poets. Grace, felicity of expression, and skill with the octosyllabic rhymed couplet are his distinctions; with now and then a tone of greater seriousness which is all the more striking because of the general lightness of touch.[26] He is nothing if not sophisticated; learned and allusive. The best known of his poems is, of course, the "Coy Mistress" (page 73), a poem which is in every anthology, and which is too well known to quote. I should like to call attention, however, to the skillful form in which the poem is cast. The eight-syllable rhymed couplet is one of the most difficult of forms to use without monotony; and the "Coy Mistress" is, for its length, one of the finest specimens in the language. It has, you observe, three divisions. The first (page 73) is almost wholly a rapid and bewilderingly clever succession of conceits; it is almost pure *wit*.[27] The second section, beginning

But at my back I always hear
Time's winged chariot hurrying near;

is a sudden transition to intense seriousness; the third section, beginning

Now therefore, while the youthful hue[28]

is a sort of coda; or it is like the conclusion of a syllogism of which the other two are the premises. [And before speaking of any other of Marvell's poems, I want to turn in passing to the "Exequy" by Bishop King on page 203. This ought to be read and studied together with the "Coy Mistress." Bishop King did not succeed in writing many good poems – you can verify that statement by looking him up in George Saintsbury's three volume collection of Caroline Poets; but this one is a very fine poem indeed, and I think as good in its way as Marvell's.[29] You will find the same succession of conceits indicating the influence of Donne, and then the sudden concentration

Sleep on my Love in thy cold bed
Never to be disquieted!
My last good night! Thou wilt not wake
Till I thy fate shall overtake:
Till age, or grief, or sickness, must
Marry my body to that dust
It so much loves; and fill the room
My heart keeps empty in thy tomb.
Stay for me there; I will not fail
To meet thee in that hollow vale.
And think not much of my delay;
I am already on the way.[30]

But Marvell is much the more accomplished disciple of Donne.]

Look at the graceful ingenuity of "The Definition of Love": if anything, it is too clever an imitation of Donne.[31] Marvell, the moderate Puritan, outrages the conceit as ruthlessly as does Crashaw. In his lines on Appleton House, in order to pay a compliment to its owner, Lord Fairfax, he pictures the house as adapting itself to its owner:

Yet thus the laden house does sweat,
And scarce endure the master great:
But where he comes, the swelling hall
Stirs, and the square grows spherical . . .

Not a very happy conceit, because it suggests that Lord Fairfax was a very fat man rather than a very great man.[32] [A little later on in the same poem (a very interesting one) he has a more felicitous image,

The tawny mowers enter next;
Who seem like Israelites to be,
Walking on foot through a green sea.[33]

Green, by the way, is a colour which fascinated Marvell. It recurs several times in this poem; elsewhere he even addresses a lady as Chlora; and one of his most famous couplets is

Annihilating all that's made
To a green thought in a green shade.][34]

A light grace and classical dignity which reminds one of his masters – Horace – is Marvell's chief distinction.[35] But he is a very interesting subject of study. He is so close to Donne, and so near to the courtly poets, such as Lovelace and Suckling, and yet on the other hand he has a kind of Latin quality which reminds me of Milton.

My chief reason for speaking of Milton at all is to explain why I do not say more about him. [For one thing, Milton is too great a poet to be dealt with in even one whole talk;] and he is too great, and too individual, to fit into a series which aims to trace the transition between Donne and Dryden.[36] Milton is no disciple of Donne. He is a solitary figure. He looks over the heads of all of these men, even of Donne; and his affinities are chiefly, I think, with Spenser and Marlowe: with Spenser chiefly as a master of metrical form in very long poems; and with Marlowe as a master of magniloquence in blank verse. I think the blank verse of Milton is much closer to that of Marlowe – with its use, even abuse, of high-sounding names and allusions – than to that of Shakespeare. "Comus" is perhaps the best example among his shorter poems to illustrate Milton's separate or collateral descent from the Elizabethan dramatists, Marlowe and the masques of Ben Jonson.[37] The nearest he comes to the metaphysical poets is in a rather bad sonnet on the Cambridge carrier;[38] and in the "Hymn of the Nativity" which Professor Grierson has chosen rightly to include (page 95). Some of the figures of speech are very near to the conceit in their elaboration:

> That glorious form, that light insufferable,
> And that far beaming blaze of majesty,
> Wherewith he wont at heaven's high council table,
> To sit the midst of trinal unity,
> He laid aside; and here with us to be,
>   Forsook the courts of everlasting day,
> And chose with us a darksome house of mortal clay.[39]

There is a similar parade of learning; but even here, you notice a kind of individual distortion of the language:

> Wherewith he wont at heaven's high council table
> To sit the midst of trinal unity

which is pure Milton. The syntax of Donne and his followers is generally pretty simple and straightforward; it is only their images which are complicated and difficult; but Milton – and it is one of his great merits and great dangers – is almost a contortionist of grammar.[40] Yet in this Ode Milton is often near to the continental style which I mentioned in connection with Crashaw, to what is called Gongorism, after the Spanish poet Gongora.[41] I can best express my own feeling about the poem by saying that if anyone but Milton had written it[,] it would not be a great or even a readable poem. Milton is a very great poet indeed; but when we read a poem like this, and when we pass [as we shall do next week] to a minor artist like Cowley, we may well be thankful that Dryden appeared to put the English language straight again.[42]

[Next week, then, I shall have to talk about several minor poets, of whom the best is Abraham Cowley, who by their virtues and vices prepared the way for Dryden; and for another type of poetry, gradually becoming visible, represented by Denham, Oldham and Waller, which also finds its fruition in Dryden and Pope.][43]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 8.30 p.m. on Friday 28 Mar as TSE's fourth talk in a series of six weekly lectures on seventeenth-century literature. Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in

square brackets. TSE's outline for these talks is presented in "Syllabus for a Course of Six Talks on Seventeenth Century Poetry" (*L4* 449-51).

2. TSE repeats this request from his previous broadcast (4.80). In his third Clark lecture on "Crashaw" he remarked: "Theresa's autobiography is almost essential to any understanding of Crashaw" (2:707).

3. "On the Death of Mr. Crashaw" (1646), ll. 1-2. TSE modernizes the text of all quotations from Grierson's anthology *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (hereafter abbreviated *MLP*). Cowley was a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, when Crashaw was a Fellow at Peterhouse.

4. Silurist (OED): "A native of the district anciently inhabited by the Silures." Vaughan used the epithet to signal his Welsh background on the title page of *Silex Scintillans* (1650). "Henricus Vaughan Siluris" appeared on his gravestone in Llansanffraid, Breconshire.

5. In Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism*, which TSE studied at Harvard, lines by Vaughan and Blake are quoted together to illustrate a vision of the world "whereby an ineffable radiance, a beauty and a reality never before suspected are perceived by a sort of clairvoyance shining in the meanest things" (London: Methuen, 1911), 305.

6. In his review of Blunden's *On the Poems of Henry Vaughan: Characteristics and Intimations* (1927), TSE notes that Blunden would like to turn Vaughan into "a complete nature poet like himself . . . a poet who, enjoying fresh air and green hillsides, occupies himself in plastering nature with his own fancies" (3.192).

7*. TSE's note: "The references are to Grierson's *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century from Donne to Butler*. Oxford University Press. 6s."

8. Vaughan seems to have believed in a Neoplatonic notion of a prior state of existence, which, in the innocence of childhood, is recalled in glimpses of paradise in nature, but which passes away in maturity. Wordsworth, who might have read Vaughan's poem, takes up this idea in "Ode: Intimations of Immortality from Recollections of Early Childhood" (1807). In *On the Poems of Henry Vaughan*, Blunden says of "The Retreat" that "those who know it all recognize the resemblance of its theory to that of Wordsworth's more sumptuous 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality'" (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1927), 25. TSE's book review disagrees: "The two poems have little in common; Wordsworth's Ode is a superb piece of verbiage, and Vaughan's poem is a simple and sincere statement of feeling" (3.191).

9. In A. N. Whitehead's cosmology, eternal objects are joined together with subjective forms in patterns: "a pattern is the 'manner' of a complex contrast abstracted from the specific eternal objects which constitute the 'matter' of the contrast. But the pattern refers unselectively to any eternal objects with the potentiality of being elements in the 'matter' of some contrast in that 'manner.'" *Process and Reality* (Cambridge UP, 1929), 161. In "Dante" (1929), TSE observes: "it appears obvious that the *Vita Nuova* [New Life] could only have been written around a personal experience" (3.192).

10. In his review of Blunden, TSE comments: "Vaughan's Anglicanism is far from the cheerfulness and democracy of Laud, and rather near to a sombre Welsh nonconformity" (3.192).

11. For TSE's reflections on Vaughan's mysticism, see "The Silurist" (1927) (3.190-91). Underhill's *Mysticism* quotes from Vaughan's "The Night" (1655) as an illustration of "Divine Darkness" (414) and "I saw Eternity the other night, / Like a great Ring of pure and endless

light" from "The World" (1650) in a chapter titled "The Dark Night of the Soul" after St. John of the Cross (489). TSE's Harvard notecards (Houghton) transcribe a passage on light and dark imagery in St. John of the Cross from Dean Inge's *Christian Mysticism* (1899) in which he would also have read about Eckhart's fascination with the concept of the Divine Dark. In an interview with the *Yorkshire Post*, TSE responded to the question "Are you yourself not, perhaps, a failed mystic?" with "No doubt Wordsworth and Vaughan and Trehern [*sic*] . . . had some curious mystical experiences. But I can't think of any mystic who was also a fine poet, except Saint John of the Cross" (3); rpt. in *The Bed Post: A Miscellany of the Yorkshire Post*, ed. Kenneth Young (London: Macdonald, 1962), 41-53; here 46.

12. "The Lampe" (1650), ll. 2-4; "Midnight" (1650), ll. 11-13; "Joy of my life" (1650), ll. 13-15. *The Works of Henry Vaughan*, vol 2, ed. L. C. Martin (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1914), 410, 421, 423. TSE modernizes the spelling of this and subsequent quotations from this two-volume edition of Vaughan's poetry which he owned.

13. "The World," ll. 1-2; "They are all gone into the world of light" (1655), l. 1; "Ascension-Hymn" (1655), ll. 13-17 (vol 2, 466, 483, 483).

14. TSE likely relates an anecdote passed on by Ker's close friend Charles Whibley, for in 1942 when he delivered the W. P. Ker Memorial Lecture at Glasgow University, TSE remarked: "I never met Ker: it is a cause of regret to me that I missed the one opportunity offered me, which came only a few weeks before his last journey to Switzerland."

15. "The Timber" (1655), ll. 5-8 (vol 2, 497).

16. For TSE's observations on the nature poetry anthologized in *Georgian Poetry*, see "Verse Pleasant and Unpleasant" (1918), 1:679.

17. "To the River *Isca*" (1651), ll. 61-64 (vol 1, 40).

18. TSE refers to the eighteenth-century poet William Collins.

19. "Vanity of Spirit" (1650), ll. 9-15 (vol 2, 418).

20. In the winter of 1896-97, W. T. Brooke purchased for a few pence two manuscripts from a London street bookstall. The bookseller and literary scholar Bertram Dobell (1842-1914) identified Traherne as the author of these manuscripts, which Brooke had wrongly attributed to Vaughan, first published as *The Poetical Works* (1903) and *Centuries of Meditations* (1908).

21. Most likely Herbert Read: TSE wrote to Read on 8 May 1929 to ask his opinion on an essay on Traherne by Thomas Beachcroft "as you probably know Traherne better than I do" (*L4* 492). Beachcroft's essay "Traherne, and the Doctrine of Felicity" was published in the *Criterion* for Jan 1930 (291-307).

22. In "William Blake" (1920), TSE refers to Blake's "extraordinary labour of simplification" as a "great technical accomplishment" (2:187).

23. "Wonder" (1903), ll. 33-40; *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne*, ed. Bertram Dobell (London: Dobell, 1906), 6.

24. TSE rejects Dobell's claims for the affinities between Traherne and Blake propounded in his introduction to *The Poetical Works of Thomas Traherne*. Dobell suggests that Traherne anticipates Blake's praise of childhood innocence and even goes so far as to assert that Traherne and Blake were not only alike in character but also shared a similar belief in the power of the imagination.

25. Marvell was MP for Hull from 1659 until his death in 1678. Hull's tercentenary celebrations of the birth of Marvell were noted in the *Times* (1 Apr 1921), 9. TSE's essay "Andrew

Marvell" (1921) was collected in *Andrew Marvell, 1621-1678: Tercentenary Tributes*, ed. W. H. Bagguley (1922). In a short notice probably by TSE of H. M. Margoliouth's edition of *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, vol 1 (1927), the reviewer calls Marvell "a man who was not only a very fine poet but a politician and a patriot in an intensely interesting epoch" (*Criterion*, 7, Jan 1928), 90.

26. In "Andrew Marvell" (1921), TSE praises Marvell's "alliance of levity and seriousness by which the seriousness is intensified" (2:312).

27. Again, TSE draws on his remarks in "Andrew Marvell" (1921), where he defines the wit of the Caroline poets as a "tough reasonableness beneath the slight lyric grace" (2:310).

28. "To his Coy Mistress" (1681), ll. 21-22, 33 (*MLP* 74).

29. In "Andrew Marvell" (1923), TSE says that Henry King is "greater than Marvell" (2:456). TSE encountered King's exequy to his late wife in the third volume of Saintsbury's edition of *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period* (1921).

30. "The Exequy," ll. 203-06 (*MLP* 205).

31. "The Definition of Love" (1681) develops a witty conceit on the idea that the separation of lovers is not parting, recalling Donne's "A Valediction; forbidding mourning" (1633).

32. Thomas Fairfax, third Lord Fairfax of Cameron (1621-71), resigned as Commander-in-Chief of the parliamentary army after the execution of King Charles I and retired to his country estate at Nun Appleton in Yorkshire, where Marvell tutored his daughter Mary.

33. "Upon Appleton House, to my Lord Fairfax" (1681), ll. 49-52, 388-90; *The Poems and Letters of Andrew Marvell*, vol 1, ed. H. M. Margoliouth (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1927), 60, 71. TSE quotes these lines in "Andrew Marvell" (1921) (2.314).

34. "The Garden" (1681), ll. 47-48 (*MLP* 210). In Marvell's poetry, the adjective green evokes the innocence of the natural world before the Fall. Vita Sackville-West's *Andrew Marvell*, published by TSE as the first in Faber's "The Poets on the Poets" series and included in his bibliography for these broadcasts, devotes three pages to his frequent use of the word, asserting that "the principal clue to Marvell's nature-mysticism lies, I think, in the obsession that green had for him" (London: Faber, 1929, 35). Marvell addresses Chlora, a conventional name in pastoral poetry, in "Mourning" and "The Gallery" (1681).

35. Marvell wrote odes in imitation of Horace. In "Andrew Marvell" (1921), TSE praised "An Horatian Ode upon Cromwell's Return from Ireland" (1681) and observed: "The verse of Marvell has not the grand reverberation of Catullus's Latin; but the image of Marvell is certainly more comprehensive and penetrates greater depths than Horace's" (2:312).

36. In his syllabus for these broadcast talks, TSE states that "Milton's major works will not be discussed" (*L4* 450). On 20 Feb 1930, he explained this decision in a letter to R. A. Rendall: "I think that the introduction of Dryden and Milton in a half hour would be rather confusing, especially to the listeners who knew something about them and nothing about the metaphysicals" (*L5* 109).

37. In "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (1927), TSE claims that "it remained for Marlowe to discover, and Milton to perfect, the musical possibilities of classical names almost to the point of *incantation*" (3.224) and in "Ben Jonson" (1919) that "*Comus* contains fine poetry, and poetry exemplifying some merits to which Jonson's masque poetry cannot pretend" (2:160).

38. "On the University Carrier, Who Sickened in the Time of his Vacancy, Being Forbid To Go to London by Reason of the Plague" (1645). In *Lives*, Johnson observes: "Milton tried the metaphysic style only in his lines upon Hobson the carrier" (10).

39. "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" (1645; composed 1629), ll. 8-14 (*MLP* 95). In his syllabus to these broadcasts, TSE contends that "Puritanism produced no great 'devotional' verse except Milton's *Hymn to the Nativity*" (*L4* 450).

40. In "Milton I" (1936), TSE develops his criticism of Milton's "involved syntax" and in "Milton II" (1947) he quotes Johnson's admonishment in *Lives* of Milton's "*Babylonish dialect*, in itself harsh and barbarous, but made by exalted genius and extensive learning the vehicle of so much instruction and so much pleasure, that, like other lovers, we find grace in its deformity."

41. In an essay on Milton praised by TSE, Grierson quotes from "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity" observing: "That was not to be Milton's mature style. But these conceits are not those of Donne and Cowley. They are those of Marino, and Southwell, and Crashaw" ("John Milton" *Criterion*, 8, Sept 1928, 15). TSE read about the European influence of "Gongorism" in Mario Praz's *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* (1925). On 7 Jan, he accepted extracts from Edward Meryon Wilson's translations from Góngora's *Las soledades* for publication in the *Criterion*, 9 (July 1930), 604-05.

42. TSE alludes to Johnson's metaphor on Dryden's "refinement of our language" in *Lives*: "He found it brick and he left it marble" (187).

43. The concluding broadcasts in this series are "The Minor Metaphysicals: From Cowley to Dryden" (4.109) and "John Dryden" (4.120).

D. H. Lawrence

To the Editor of *The Nation and Athenaeum*

The Nation and Athenaeum, 45 (5 Apr 1930) 11

Sir, Mr. E. M. Forster, in a letter in your issue of March 29th, says "straight out" that the late D. H. Lawrence was "the greatest imaginative novelist of our time."[1]

I am the last person to wish to disparage the genius of Lawrence, or to disapprove when a writer of the eminence of Mr. Forster speaks "straight out." But the virtue of speaking straight out is somewhat diminished if what one speaks is not sense. And unless we know exactly what Mr. Forster means by *greatest*, *imaginative*, and *novelist*, I submit that this judgment is meaningless. For there are at least three "novelists" of "our generation" – two of whom are living – for whom a similar claim might he made.[2]

Yours, etc.,

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In his letter, following Lady Ottoline Morrell's obituary tribute to Lawrence, Forster asserted: "All that we can do . . . is to say straight out that he was the greatest imaginative novelist of our generation" (888).

2. Forster replied in the issue of 12 Apr: "Mr. T. S. Eliot duly entangles me in his web. He asks what exactly I mean by 'greatest,' 'imaginative' and 'novelist,' and I cannot say. Worse still, I cannot even say what 'exactly' means – only that there are occasions when I would rather feel like a fly than a spider, and that the death of D. H. Lawrence is one of them" (209). TSE told Desmond MacCarthy on 8 Oct 1930 that the sentiments expressed in his letter "did not arise from my having a lower opinion of Lawrence than Forster has, but from a feeling of impatience with a worthless generalisation. What is wanted for Lawrence now is not praise or blame, but patient analysis" (*L5* 337).

The Minor Metaphysicals: From Cowley to Dryden[1]

The Listener, 3 (9 Apr 1930) 641-42

In an age of rich poetic accomplishment we may expect to find a swarm of minor poets each of whom is the author of one or two noteworthy pieces of verse. Donne invented an idiom, a language which less original men could learn to talk; and which they went on talking until they talked it out; and Dryden imposed a new way of speech on the next hundred years. [The four men about whom I have spoken in the last fortnight:] Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan and Marvell, all made valuable variations on this idiom.[2] Then come a third and a fourth class of poets: those who wrote a few good short poems without altering the idiom in any interesting way; and those who achieved originality certainly, but only at the price of eccentricity. Of those who wrote a few good poems, I recommend, besides Bishop King, whose "Exequy" I have quoted, Carew, Suckling, Lovelace. [Look at Carew's poem on page 37. It begins with a line which Donne might have written

> Now you have freely given me leave to love,
> What will you do?

Study the rest of the poem, and you will see that Carew simply has not the brain power to carry on a whole poem like Donne. He falls into simple conventions, talks of "Wounds, flames, and darts."[3] In the hands of a very small poet the language of any master will become a chilly artifice, wholly divorced from reality. You have only to look, in our own time, at the work of some of the imitators of Mr. James Joyce. Take again the poem by Suckling on page 41

> Oh! for some honest lover's ghost.[4]

and you find exactly the same thing happening. It would take a very sensitive connoisseur indeed to say why one poem is by Carew and the other by Suckling. All that most of us could say is that these are two very pretty poems obviously by feeble followers of Donne.[5] But in Lovelace I seem to feel a different spirit stirring. In his best known poems – such as To Lucasta (page 58) and To Althea from Prison (61) there is the anticipation of the graceful vers de société of another generation. You will find their continuation in the verse of Sedley, Rochester, Aphra Behn, Sheffield, down to Gay and Prior. Lovelace has the spirit of the Restoration rather than that of the first Caroline period.][6]

In a poet like Lovelace you observe an insensible and unconscious transition. There was a different type of poet who encouraged the change of idiom merely by his abuse of the prevailing one. These are careful professionals, not charming amateurs. Of such, the most notorious is John Cleveland, because he was chosen as the bad example by Dr. Johnson in his *Life of Cowley*; and another man who passed with little notice in his own day, but who has been rescued from oblivion by Dr. Saintsbury in his collection of Caroline poets. That is Benlowes.[7] [I will not afflict you with any quotations from Cleveland, having quoted him once, but I should like you to hear a bit of Benlowes, taken almost at random out of a long poem in his favourite peculiar metre:] Remember that almost everyone, even in his own day, despised his verses; one satirist asserted that someone had been made ill merely by wearing a hat lined with pages of Benlowes' poems.[8] He wrote with equal fluency and obscurity in English and Latin, sometimes in the same poem. I confess myself to a mild partiality to this man's verse – which is perhaps more likely to do my reputation harm than to do Benlowes' good. His most considerable poem is called "Pneumato-Sarco-Machia": otherwise "Theophila's Spiritual Warfare"; and, so far as one can make out, has something to do with theology, and the struggles of the human soul. [There is hardly any reason for quoting one stanza rather than another. I think you may detect a faint resemblance to Browning at his worst.

At first God made them one, thus; by subjecting
   The sense to reason; and directing
The appetite by the spirit: but sin, by infecting

Man's free-born will, so shatters them, that they
   At present nor cohabit may
Without regret, nor without grief depart away.

Go, cheating world, that dancest o'er thy thorns;
   Lov'st what undoes; hat'st what adorns:
Go, idolise thy vice, and virtue load with scorns.

Thy luscious cup, more deadly than asp's gall,
   Empoisoneth souls for hell: thou all

Time's mortals dost enchant with thy delusive call.

Who steals from Time, Time steals from him the prey:
  Pastimes pass Time, pass heaven away:
Few, like the blessed thief, do steal Salvation's Day.][9]

I have spoken of[, and quoted,] Benlowes, not merely because of my fondness for this inglorious but by no means mute Browning; but in order to show how a versifier of much above the ordinary level, a man of original and ingenious fancy, better than half the poets who were well reviewed yesterday or will be well reviewed to-morrow, can bring a good idiom to such a point that a drastic reform of language is needed.[10] Our language, or any civilised language, is like the phoenix: it springs anew from its own ashes. And correct language *is* civilisation.

Abraham Cowley was born in 1618: he was only six years younger than Crashaw, yet he belongs to another generation, in fact he almost himself created this new generation; and that is what is interesting about him.[11] [For my purpose, he is not fairly represented in Grierson's anthology; though if I were making an anthology, I should not choose otherwise than Grierson has done. What I mean is that Professor Grierson naturally chose from amongst Cowley's most pleasing pieces; the bits I shall read to you are chosen to show first Cowley as the disciple of Donne, and second Cowley as the precursor of Dryden.[12] But first of all,] Cowley, as a biographical figure, is definitely a William-and-Mary or late Stuart museum piece rather than an early Caroline. The fervent spirituality of the early seventeenth century has gone; Cowley is a busy little enquiring mind of a rationalistic cast. He was a man of scientific tastes. He had known the great Hobbes, and, in Paris, during the exile – for he, too, was a royalist – had probably known the scientists there. His particular science was botany. He was an enthusiastic gardener. He was always drawing up schemes for founding institutions for scientific research. He had almost as many ideas as Mr. H. G. Wells. He had a remarkable plan for the organisation of a modern college; and he was, so far as I know, the first man to advocate the foundation of a college for teaching agriculture as a science.[13] He was active in the royalist cause, went to Paris during part of the Commonwealth government, and probably did a little honest secret service work for the exiled Stuarts. And he was an accomplished poet who admired John Donne.

Cowley's love poems are certainly imitations of Donne. [Dr. Johnson, who is rather severe about Cowley, repeats the rumour that Cowley "was in love but once, and then never had resolution to tell his passion."[14] Such criticism is quite irrelevant. It does not matter whether Cowley was in love or not; what matters is that he could not discover any way of writing love poetry except to imitate Donne. Which he does very well:

Now by my love, the greatest oath that is,
  None loves you half so well as I:
  I do not ask your love for this;
But for Heaven's sake believe me, or I die.
  No servant e're but did deserve
His master should believe that he does serve;
And I'll ask no more wages, though I starve.[15]]

What Cowley misses in verses like these is what every imitator misses: the union of original language with original metric. But when Cowley turns to a really congenial subject, he becomes a different man. [I will read some selections from his Ode on Wit:

Tell me, O tell, what kind of thing is Wit,
  Thou who master art of it.
For the first matter loves variety less;
Less women love't, either in love or dress.
  A thousand different shapes it bears,
  Comely in thousand shapes appears.
Yonder we saw it plain; and here 'tis now,
Like spirits in a place, we know not how.

'Tis not to force some lifeless verses meet
  With their five gouty feet.
All everywhere, like man's, must be the soul,
And reason the inferior powers control . . .

In a true piece of wit all things must be,
  Yet all things there agree.
As in the ark, joined without force or strife,
All creatures dwelt; all creatures that had life.
  Or as the primitive forms of all.
  (If we compare great things with small)
Which without discord or confusion lie,
In that strange mirror of the deity.][16]

Cowley has none of the religious feeling of the seventeenth century; he is a celibate epicurean churchman of eighteenth-century type, paraphrasing Horace on the virtues of the country life, and complaining that he can get no money from his tenants, and that his meadows are eaten up by cattle put in by his neighbours.[17] He imitates the form of Donne, and yet in his content anticipates another age. Let me quote one of his finest Odes – that to Mr. Hobbes the philosopher:

Vast bodies of philosophy
I oft have seen, and read,
But all are bodies dead,
Or bodies by art fashioned;
I never yet the living soul could see,
But in thy books and thee.
'Tis only God can know
Whether the fair Idea thou dost show
Agree entirely with his own, or no.
This I dare boldly tell,
'Tis so like truth 'twill serve our turn as well.
Just, as in nature thy proportions be,
As full of concord their variety,
As firm the parts upon their centre rest,
And all so solid are that they at least
As much as nature, emptiness detest.[18]

This is a transition between the style of Donne and the style of Dryden; in metric it is much more eighteenth than seventeenth century. But in feeling also it is more eighteenth century. Cowley, the admirer of Mr. Hobbes the philosopher, Cowley who had probably met and conversed with the great sceptic St. Évremond, in Paris, is an eighteenth-century rationalist in spirit, although to Dr. Johnson he is a seventeenth-century metaphysical in form.

And with Cowley's Ode on Wit, and his Ode to Mr. Hobbes, the passing of one age is marked, and the birth of another. Something has gone from English poetry which has never been recovered; and something else has begun which was itself to last only for a limited time. The Elizabethan Age had, even in its smallest writers, the sense of tragedy and of comedy, the attitude of a kind of inspired recklessness. The Jacobean-Caroline period has a more civilised grace, and a background of religious belief which casts seriousness and dignity over their lightest lines. It is not insignificant that the monarch who gives his name to the age is dignified with the style of Martyr.[19] On all sides, it was an age of lost causes, and unpopular names, and forsaken beliefs, and impossible loyalties, as Matthew Arnold would have said; the beauty of life and the shadow of martyrdom are the background.[20] In our own time there is a chasm of isolation between living men and women who belong to the pre-War and the post-War period; but no greater difference than that between the writers of the time of Charles I and the Commonwealth and the writers of Charles II and William and Mary and Queen Anne. When I speak of the particular seriousness of the pre-Restoration I am not thinking of one side rather than another: I include Milton, and Bunyan and Baxter as of that age, as men who knew the beauty of life and the possibility of martyrdom and sacrifice for a cause.[21] And I sometimes wonder whether the generation succeeding my own may not be also a generation which has lost faith in lost causes.

The reasons for such changes are too numerous and concurrent, and too various, ever to be assembled finally. The court which had been formed in exile was of course directly submitted to French influences. The alteration of English poetry is nothing sudden. As I have tried to show, on the one hand a man like Cowley imitates Donne consciously and anticipates Dryden unconsciously: compare his two odes mentioned with Dryden's "Alexander's Feast" or his "Ode on St. Cecilia's Day."[22] On the other hand, some of the minor original poets of the earlier period push the style to such excesses that any change is welcome. But, of course, there were men writing verse who belong chronologically to the earlier generation, and who have acquired importance largely because their way of writing was the foundation of the new way. The three most important are Denham, Waller and Oldham; all of them specialists in the heroic or ten-syllabic iambic couplet.

Neither the ten-syllable couplet nor the genre of satire was the invention of Dryden. In Elizabethan times, this combination has an honourable history, with the names of Hall and Marston and, of course, the satires of Donne. But it was then only a minor mode of verse. Browne of Tavistock, and Drummond of Hawthornden, used the same couplet in more or less pastoral verse.[23] The first poet to accomplish anything in what may be called definitely the new style was an insignificant and rather ignominious figure, Sir John Denham. Denham belonged to a good middle-class family of civil service type. He was born in Dublin in 1615 – almost the same age as Crashaw, but of another generation in spirit. He was a royalist who took some part in the wars, though without distinction, and in the court of the restoration was not a wholly dignified figure. Indeed, a man of no great distinction.[24]

But in a poem composed before the wars, though revised after, he shows himself as the precursor of Dryden and Pope. It is "Cooper's Hill," a poem describing the prospect from a certain position near Windsor, depicting the country charms, and meditation on various matters. I will quote a few of the best-known lines; and remember that this man is a contemporary of Crashaw and the younger disciples of Donne.

> My eye, descending from the hill, surveys
> Where Thames among the wanton valleys strays.
> Thames, the most loved of all the ocean's sons
> By his old sire, to his embraces runs,
> Hasting to pay his tribute to the sea,
> Like mortal life to meet eternity.
> Though with those streams he no resemblance hold
> Whose foam is amber, and their gravel gold . . .
> O could I flow like thee, and make thy stream
> My great example, as it is my theme!
> Though deep, yet clear, though gentle, yet not dull,
> Strong without rage, without o'erflowing full. . . .[25]

The last two lines, with their prim antitheses, were particularly admired by the eighteenth century. And now, in order to point the difference of workmanship, I will go back and quote a few lines in the same form by Donne, not from one of his satires, but from a "verse letter":

> Our storm is past, and that storm's tyrannous rage
> A stupid calm, but nothing it, doth 'suage.
> The fable is inverted, and far more
> A block afflicts, now, than a stork before . . .
> The fighting place now seamen's rags supply;
> And all the tackling is a frippery.
> No use of lanthorns; and in one place lay
> Feathers and dust, to-day and yesterday . . .[26]

It is no use my analysing the difference between these two exercises in the same form of verse, unless you feel it; and if you feel all the difference, there is no need for me to analyse it. But remember that if you like Donne better than Denham, that does not mean that Denham is not likeable.

[It was Pope who gave fame to Waller as a precursor of Dryden; but in spite of Pope's opinion I think that Denham is the more remarkable poet than Waller.[27] Denham, Oldham, Davenant: these are the important predecessors of Dryden; and of Oldham and Davenant I shall say a little more in my last talk.[28]

But in ending the present talk I must face an objection which I am sure will have occurred to many of those who have had the patience to go on listening. What is the good, you will have said to yourselves, of all this worrying about influences, antecedents and successions; what one wants, and all that one wants, is to have pointed out to one what is really good poetry, and to be helped to enjoy it for its own sake. You do not even pretend (you may say to me) that there is any very keen pleasure to be got from reading Cowley and Denham. And what I am doing, you may think, is merely to trace the history of poetry; and you may well doubt whether the knowledge of the history is going to help you to enjoy the good poetry any better. Tell us who are the good poets, and why (if you can) and mention some of their best poems; and that is all we want from you.

Well, the odd thing is that our enjoyment of the best poetry is very much enhanced by our appreciation; and appreciation is not merely a matter of being very sensitive and knowing the real thing when we come across it, but of knowing why it is and how it is what it is and how it resembles and differs from other good things of other kinds. It took me a good many years, not only of reading but of experience of life, to enjoy and appreciate the poetry of Dryden, the poetry of Samuel Johnson, of Gray and Collins and the eighteenth century generally. But now I find that the more kinds and periods of poetry I enjoy, the more I enjoy each kind. I enjoy Elizabethan drama, or Caroline verse, all the more for seeing how many other kinds of mentality and of diction and metric are possible and justifiable.]

John Donne, using his special equipment and developing in his own way the language already developed by the dramatists, created, as I have said, an idiom which was capable of exploitation by a number of other poets. To us, Donne's way of speech seems more "natural" than that of Dryden; and in general we incline, I believe, to think of the poetry of the eighteenth century as more "artificial" than that of the seventeenth. But we must remember that what is artificial in one perspective is not so in another; and that the poets of the second period of the seventeenth century, the poets who built up the idiom which was still grandly spoken by Dr. Johnson in his poems, believed, and believed rightly, that they were making a reform in the direction of naturalness and simplicity. Every generation of us, as we revolt from the preceding, believes the same thing, and is usually right. What was natural and right for Donne became something highly affected when written by minor followers. The reaction was towards good sense, sobriety and the speech of a cultivated gentleman. These do not seem to us the very highest qualities of poetry; but the point to keep in mind is that they are important qualities, and that poetry cannot afford for very long to do without them. They are as vital to verse as they are to prose; and the greatest possible mistake would be to label the poetry of Dryden and his successors as *prosaic*.[29] The infusion of the prosaic into verse is an accomplishment of the greatest masters of verse. One of the reasons why Donne is a great poet is that he was able to use in verse, thought, vocabulary, and language which men of less inspiration would have excluded as prosaic. On the contrary, if there is a reproach to be levelled against the poetry of the age inaugurated by Dryden, it is that this poetry is not prosaic enough; it is from our point of view often much too poetical. But so was much of their prose; and the prose and verse of a period should be considered in relation to each other.

[In talking of Dryden next week I shall try to emphasise his derivation from the metaphysical poetry, rather than his contrast to it; so I shall have to touch upon some of his poetry which is seldom mentioned and never read, such as Astraea Redux and Annus Mirabilis.][30]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 8.30 p.m. on Friday 4 Apr as TSE's fifth talk in a series of six weekly lectures on seventeenth-century literature. Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets. TSE's outline for these talks is presented in "Syllabus for a Course of Six Talks on Seventeenth Century Poetry" (*L4* 449-51).

2. For TSE's comments on these poets, see his previous broadcasts: "The Devotional Poets of the Seventeenth Century: Donne, Herbert, Crashaw" (4.71-84) and "Mystic and Politician as Poet: Vaughan, Traherne, Marvell, Milton" (4.95-107).

3. "To a Lady that desired I would love her" (1640), ll. 1-2, 22. TSE modernizes the spelling of quotations from Herbert Grierson's 1921 anthology *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (*MLP* 37).

4. "Sonnet" (1646), line 1.

5. In his fourth Clark lecture, "The Conceit in Donne," TSE states that the "influence of Donne" can be observed in "the courtly poets of *vers de société*, such as Carew and Suckling" (2.682).

6. "To Lucasta, Going to the Warres" (1649); "To Althea, from Prison" (1649). Vivian de Sola Pinto's recent edition of the *Poetical and Dramatic Works* of Sir Charles Sedley (1639-1701) was reviewed by John Hayward in the *Criterion* for Apr 1929. The writings of Aphra Behn (1640?-89) were published in 6 vols by Montague Summers in 1915. TSE possessed the text of Samuel Johnson's "Life" (1779) of the politician and author John Sheffield, first duke of Buckingham and Normanby (1649-1721), in his copy of *Lives*.

7. Selections of poems by Benlowes and Lovelace were collected in vol 1 (1905) and 3 (1921) of George Saintsbury's *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*. TSE originally considered devoting a whole broadcast on "The Minor Metaphysicals" to examining "What there is to be said" for Cleveland and Benlowes (*L4* 450), but on 20 Nov 1929, he conceded to Charles Siepmann that "a whole half hour on Cleveland and Benlowes is probably too stiff" (*L4* 681).

8. This satire appears in Samuel Butler's "Character of a Small Poet" (1759) and is recounted by Saintsbury in his introduction to Benlowes.

9. "Theophilia, or Loves Sacrifice" (1652), Canto 1, stanzas 32-36. *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*, vol 1, ed. George Saintsbury (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1905), 337.

10. In a letter of 8 Aug 1944, TSE advised Arthur Sale: "Try a good dose of Benlowes. The stimulation of the novelty of the idiom soon wears off, the method of using imagery and the versification soon become oppressive; and one is ready to concede admiration, rather than put oneself to the torture of reading to the end."

11. TSE's comments on Cowley draw heavily on his seventh Clark lecture, "Cowley and the Transition" (2.725).

12. Grierson's anthology includes four poems by Cowley: "The Spring" (1647), "The Change" (1647), "Ode: Of Wit" (1656) and "Against Hope" (1656). In "A Note on Two Odes of Cowley" (1938), TSE says: "The poems included in Sir Herbert Grierson's anthology exhibit Cowley at his mild best and most readable."

13. Cowley met Hobbes in Paris in 1646. For Cowley's educational schemes, see *A Proposition for the Advancement of Experimental Philosophy* (1661) and "On Agriculture" collected in his posthumous *Essays* (1668).

14. *Lives*, 3.

15. "My Dyet" (1647) stanza 1. *Poems: Miscellanies, The Mistress, Pindarique Odes, Davideis, Verses Written on Several Occasions*, ed. A. R. Waller (Cambridge UP, 1905), 89. TSE modernizes the spelling of quotations from this edition.

16. "Ode: Of Wit," ll. 1-8, 25-28, 57-64 (*MLP* 187-89).

17. Cowley's paraphrases of Horace appear in "On Agriculture." In *Lives*, Johnson quotes Cowley's letter to Thomas Sprat of 21 May 1665 complaining of his tenants (8).

18. "To *Mr. Hobs*," (1656) stanza 1 (*Poems* 188).

19. In the Church of England's calendar, 30 Jan is designated "Charles, King and Martyr, 1649."

20. TSE alludes to Arnold's description of Oxford University: "home of lost causes, and forsaken beliefs, and unpopular names, and impossible loyalties!" "Preface," *Essays in Criticism* (London: Macmillan, 1865), xix.

21. Presbyterian theologian Richard Baxter (1615-91), author of *Call to the Unconverted* (1657), was persecuted under James II for his uncompromising Nonconformist preaching. On 25 Oct 1927, TSE wrote to Rev. F. J. Powicke to praise his *Life of the Reverend Richard Baxter*

(1924) (*L3* 781), which he anonymously noted in the *Criterion* of Oct 1927 as "the authoritative work on the great seventeenth century non-conformist theologian" (377).

22. TSE develops these comments on Dryden in his concluding broadcast "John Dryden" (4.120).

23. The poet William Browne (1590/91-1645?) of Tavistock in Devon, author of the pastoral epic *Britannia's Pastorals* (1613, 1616).

24. Denham was born in 1614/15, probably in Dublin, where his father was Chief Justice of Ireland (ODNB).

25. *Cooper's Hill* (1642-65), ll. 159-66, 189-92. *The Poetical Works of Sir John Denham*, ed. Theodore Howard Banks (London: Oxford UP, 1928), 73, 75, 77. In "Sir John Denham" (1928), TSE says of *Cooper's Hill*: "It is a succession of reflections and formal images, but none is pushed to excess or continued to monotony; they glide easily and naturally into each other; and each exists long enough to be distinct but not long enough to tire" (3.464).

26. "The Calme" (1633), ll. 1-4, 15-18. *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*, ed. John Hayward (London: Nonesuch Press, 1929), 147.

27. TSE refers to Pope's imitation of "The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace": "Waller was smooth but Dryden taught to join / The varying verse, the full-resounding line, / The long majestic march, and energy divine" ll. 267-69, *The Works of Alexander Pope*, vol 4 (London: Longman, 1847), 465. In "John Dryden" (1921), TSE asserts that Waller's poetry is "less remunerative" than Denham (2.350), but in "Sir John Denham," he claims that "Denham will not bear comparison with Waller" (3.463).

28. For TSE's comments on the poet, playwright and theater manager Sir William Davenant (1606-68), see "John Dryden" (4.128).

29. TSE alludes to William Hazlitt's lecture "On Dryden and Pope" (1818) in which he contends that "Dryden and Pope are the great masters of the artificial style of poetry of our language" and to Walter Pater's remarks in his essay on "Style" (1889) that Dryden "Loved to emphasize the distinction between poetry and prose, the protest against their confusion coming with somewhat diminished effect from one whose poetry was so prosaic." Pater was responding to Matthew Arnold's description of Dryden and Pope as prose masters in his essay "The Study of Poetry" (1880), reprinted in *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (1888). Quotations from Hazlitt, Pater, and Arnold appear in TSE's 1921 essay on John Dryden (2.350).

30. *Astraea Redux: A Poem on the Happy Restoration and Return of His Sacred Majesty Charles the Second* (1660); *Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders, 1666. An Historical Poem* (1667). TSE's broadcast on Dryden does not discuss *Astraea Redux* ("Astraea – virgin goddess of Justice – brought back").

John Dryden[1]

The Listener, 3 (16 Apr 1930) 688-89

[It may seem odd that I have chosen to include Dryden in a series of six talks, five of which have been devoted to those whom we call the metaphysical poets. For no one appears less "metaphysical" than Dryden; and his inclusion here may seem to you a caprice. But as I said at the start, I have chosen to dwell on the continuity of English poetry rather than on its divisions. Among all English poets, Donne is certainly one of the most original (which does not necessarily mean one of the greatest); yet even he has close affinities with the Elizabethan drama which surrounded him; and at the other end of my list Dryden is related through Cowley to the disciples of Donne. And the poetry of the eighteenth century is dominated by Dryden, just as two generations of the seventeenth century were dominated by Donne.]

In an essay on Dryden written eight or nine years ago, I conjectured that our time might see some rehabilitation of the reputation of Dryden and of some of his followers. My guess was inspired by a brilliant and useful critical book, *John Dryden*, by Mark van Doren, published in New York, but I believe never republished in London. Within the last year we have the *Restoration Tragedy* of Mr. Bonamy Dobrée; and the recent book by Miss Sitwell on a not unrelated subject, Alexander Pope, tends to confirm my opinion.[2] We have at least, I think, adjusted our view of Dryden by taking account of two very important parts of his work, neglected during the last century: his plays and his literary criticism. And I think we have a higher opinion of satire in verse, and a better understanding of its varieties, than our grandfathers did. But it is a mistake to think of Dryden as solely, or even as first and foremost, a satirist: *Mac Flecknoe*, *Absalom and Achitophel*, and *The Hind and the Panther* form but a small part of his total work. He was primarily a dramatist, secondly a translator; but it is as an artisan of the English language, helping to give us the modern language for verse – and indeed for prose too – that I want to discuss him.

And Dryden is one of the most remarkable masters in this respect, that no great English poet ever began with less promise. His "Heroic Stanzas" to the memory of Oliver Cromwell, and his *Annus Mirabilis*, a paean over a naval victory of the Duke of York, are assuredly amongst the worst poems in their form that exist. The metre is monotonous, the choice of words dull, his images so heavily weighted with expiring conceits that the sense is insensible and not worth getting at. [In contrasting Cromwell with "our former chiefs" he observes that

War, our consumption, was their gainful trade;
   We inward bled, whilst they prolonged our pain;
He fought to end our fighting, and assayed
   To stench the blood by breathing of the vein.

Again,

Tis true, his countenance did imprint an awe,
   And naturally all souls to his did bow;
As wands of divination downward draw,
   And point to beds where sovereign gold doth grow.[3]

This ingenious elaboration of nothing is the last feeble gasp of the conceit: though it does not remind you very forcibly of Crashaw, or even Benlowes. Dryden has replaced the grotesque folly of third-rate seventeenth-century verse with something of the jog-trot dullness of the eighteenth. He is still using a metaphysical idiom, but without the metaphysical spirit. Dryden was slow in learning how to write because he had to find out for himself how to say what he could say.

It must be admitted that Dryden's ready change of allegiance from the Commonwealth to the Restoration did not itself improve his versification; for in Annus Mirabilis we find him still writing like this. The second stanza seems to be a plea for Free Trade, a sneer at the Dutch, and an allusion to Dr. Harvey's discovery of the circulation of the blood:

Trade, which like blood should circularly flow,
   Stopped in their channels, found its freedom lost;
Thither the wealth of all the world did go,
   And seemed but shipwracked on so base a coast.

(Where I take it that "so base a coast" is a kind of pun upon the Dutch seaboard.) Here is another extreme stanza:

The fugitive flames, chastised, went forth to prey
   On pious structures, by our fathers reared;
By which to heaven they did affect the way,

Ere faith in churchmen without the works was heard.[4]

I think this last quotation is as unlike Dryden when he had got into his proper stride, as any I could quote. The syntax is crabbed and awkward, the meaning obscure; whereas Dryden's true style is smooth and immediately intelligible.]

In his beginnings, Dryden is merely a dull ape of the inferior metaphysical fashion, without really having his heart in it: therefore Shakerley Marmion and Chamberlayne, two of the most long-winded, are more readable than the early Dryden.[5] But now let me remind you of Cowley's two odes, that on "Wit" and that on "Mr. Hobbes," which I quoted last week;[6] and turn, not at once to Dryden's best odes, but to an inferior one, the "Threnodia Augustalis," not an early work, because it was written to dignify the death of Charles II. It is an irregular ode in the true Pindaric style of Cowley. Even one stanza of this elaborate work is too long to quote in full. Here, however, are a few lines descriptive of the effect of the news of the death of Charles II upon his brother, who became James II:

His pious brother, sure the best
Who ever bore that name,
Was newly risen from his rest,
And with a fervent flame,
His usual morning vows had just addressed
For his dear sovereign's health;
And hoped to have 'em heard,
In long increase of years,
In honour, fame, and wealth:
Guiltless of greatness; thus he always prayed,
Nor knew nor wished those vows he made
On his own head should be repayed.
Soon as the ill-omened rumour reached his ear
(Ill news is winged with fate and flies apace),
Who can describe the amazement in his face![7]

This is very bad verse. But it is not the badness of bad eighteenth-century verse: it is bad in a way that verse written *before* Dryden himself had written his best could be bad; bad verse written *after* Dryden had to be bad in a different way. The curse of the minor poets who succeeded Pope was not so much pomposity as sentimentality.[8]

But Dryden had the true gift of poetry: the capacity for indefinite improvement. Look at the "Song for St. Cecilia's Day," really an irregular ode, and at "Alexander's Feast," written respectively more than twenty and thirty years after the piece I have just quoted. He has now arrived at both freedom and originality of rhythm, and at precision and dignity of language.

From harmony, from heavenly harmony,
  This universal frame began;
When nature underneath a heap
  Of jarring atoms lay,
And could not heave her head,
The tuneful voice was heard from high,
  Arise, ye more than dead.
Then cold and hot and moist and dry
  In order to their stations leap,
  And music's power obey.
From harmony, from heavenly harmony
  This universal frame began:
  From harmony to harmony
Through all the compass of the notes it ran,
The diapason closing full in Man.[9]

This is the work of a man who knows that he knows how to do what he wants. Observe the skilful repetitions, the just arrangement of rhymes placed far apart; the adroit irregularities of assonance in *lay* and *obey* so close to *dry* and *harmony*; the preservation of vocabulary and tone of speech in all the magniloquence. It is very different from the lost music of Donne, who already seems a long way behind us, yet it comes from Cowley. [And much of the lyrical verse of the eighteenth and even the first part of the nineteenth century comes out of Dryden.

A quire of bright beauties in spring did appear,
  To choose a may lady to govern the year;
All the nymphs were in white, and the shepherds in green,
  The garland was given, and Phyllis was queen.[10]

This brisk canter is again very poor Dryden; but Dryden it is. And make it a little more sentimental and a little more realistic, it would be any inferior eighteenth-century work; omit Phyllis and give it an oriental setting, and it might be Tom Moore.][11]

Of Dryden's three great satires, all written in the perfection of his language, I think *The Hind and the Panther* is the most brilliant, though not the most amusing; *Mac Flecknoe* the most amusing, but the least impressive; and, on the whole, *Absalom and Achitophel* the most successful.[12] Now, satire is one of the most difficult forms of poetry. A satire must be sustained, and it must be varied; and, like everything else, it must as far as possible be coherent. It must deal with contemporary matter and yet be permanent. It must deal with matter which is by hypothesis unpoetic, and it must make that matter into poetry. And in this way satire is one of the most abstract branches of poetry; it is when successful a triumph of form; it is as near to that abstraction called pure poetry as any poetry can be.

You cannot satirise, in verse, one object very long. Satire, as portraiture or caricature, must be brief, or the mind of the reader wearies and feels that what began as satire continues merely as abuse. So the best satirical verse sketches of character are introduced into a long poem as passages, like Pope's portrait of Addison, and like the various portraits in *Absalom and Achitophel*.[13] The caricature satire of the poet Shadwell in *Mac Flecknoe* is, I feel, slightly overdone; though I admit that the merit of the poem as poetry consists in the very lightness of the subject; the employment of such magnificent verse upon so mean a figure. His other caricature of Shadwell, and that of the poet Settle, as Og and Doeg in *Absalom and Achitophel*, are also more amusing than poetic. There is no essential connection between writing bad verse, being a contemptible person, and eating and drinking too much: therefore Dryden's lines about Og and Doeg are more vituperative than universal.[14] But some of the political portraiture in *Absalom and Achitophel* is masterly. It is not the particular statesman, but a permanent type of statesman that is satirised.

The following lines are applicable to some set of people at my time:

A numerous host of dreaming saints succeed;
Of the true old enthusiastic breed:
'Gainst form and order they their power employ.
Nothing to build, and all things to destroy.

Or the better known portrait of Zimri (the Duke of Buckingham):

A man so various, that he seemed to be
Not one, but all mankind's epitome.
Stiff in opinions, always in the wrong;

Was everything by starts, and nothing long:
But, in the course of one revolving moon,
Was chymist, fiddler, statesman, and buffoon.
Then all for women, painting, rhyming, drinking,
Besides ten thousand freaks that died in thinking.
Blest madman, who could every hour employ,
With something new to wish, or to enjoy!
Railing and praising were his usual themes;
And both (to show his judgment) in extremes.

In squandering wealth was his peculiar art:
Nothing went unrewarded, but desert.
Beggared by fools, whom still he found too late:
He had his jest, and they had his estate . . .

Or the still better known lines on Achitophel (Lord Shaftesbury):

Restless, unfixed in principles and place,
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace;
A fiery soul, which working out its way,
Fretted the pygmy body to decay:
And o'er informed the tenement of clay.
A daring pilot in extremity;
Pleased with the danger, when the waves went high
He sought the storms; but, for a calm unfit,
Would steer too nigh the sands to boast his wit . . .[15]

For my present purpose [in these talks,] such verses are only incidentally *satire*. A great poet is a poet who extends the uses of verse: who makes poetry out of what we took for granted to be only matter for prose, written or often only spoken prose, or thoughts and feelings hardly expressible at all. The small poet is the poet who can only use whatever is currently accepted in his time as the poetic material – I say "in his time," because much of the so-called sordid and realistic matter of much contemporary verse is merely the poetic convention of our time, as pure a convention as the sighing swains of another age. And, looked at purely as poetry, the lines of Dryden I have been reading are as astounding a vivification of the language as anything of Donne. Like Donne, he is elevating ordinary speech to the dignity of poetry.

In my own experience, and I trust in that of many students of poetry, I have found that poetry fell into two classes: that which was a natural, and that which was an acquired taste. What I mean is not, you will observe, an objective classification; for other readers will have a natural taste for that which I have acquired, and may have to acquire a taste for that which I like at once. And again there is a division of natural taste. There are poets for whom one may have a strong personal feeling, who seem to be speaking privately to oneself; and sometimes these are all the dustier if they are rather small people. And there are others so great and so profound that one's feeling towards them seems to have nothing to do with one's personal and private experience. "Seems," I say; because actually there is no sharp division; I probably have personal reasons also for liking Shakespeare; and on the other hand there is very good impersonal reason for admiring Jules Laforgue or Cyril Tourneur, if one does admire them.[16]

But our acquired tastes in poetry are not to be despised. It is indeed in our acquired tastes that we may be surest of liking poetry as poetry; although in the study of poetry we must always begin by surrendering ourselves entirely to our natural likings, and steeping our minds in the poetry we like. But a person who only loves one poet does not love poetry; and only when we have come to enjoy as many and as various poets as we are capable of enjoying, have we the right to believe that we have a glimmering of what poetry is. Now Dryden is not a natural taste for our time; and here he is different from Donne; so you cannot approach him in the same way. It would be easy to think that one enjoyed Dryden or Pope, merely because one liked to feel that one had different tastes from the generation that admired Tennyson. But Tennyson himself is already so remote that to recognise his greatness requires as much perception of poetry as to recognise the greatness of Dryden. We are apt to enjoy the poetry of our own time largely because we find the poets to be like ourselves – and that is as natural and right as liking our family and friends – only we ought to be conscious of the fact. And we are apt to dislike the poets of an earlier generation because they represent to us much that we dislike: and *that* we cannot always help. And we may underrate Dryden because we belong to a generation which admired Tennyson; or we may over-rate him – or rather, we may delude ourselves into thinking we appreciate him – merely in a spirit of anti-Victorian revolt. And finally we can come to a genuine and pure enjoyment of him. I once said something to the effect that no person of our time can be said to know what poetry is unless he enjoys the poetry of Pope as poetry; and I would say the same of Dryden.[17] For what is poetic about poetry is just the invention or discovery or elaboration of a new idiom in verse: and from this point of view Marlowe, and Donne, and Dryden, and Wordsworth, and Browning, are all equal in Heaven. Their differences in rank are not poetic differences, but spiritual degrees: and I am not here concerned with the Spirit which giveth life, but with the Letter which giveth life.[18]

[I should recommend anyone who would start reading Dryden, to begin with the two great odes, St. Cecilia and Alexander's Feast; to continue with the three great satires, Mac Flecknoe, Absalom and Achitophel, and The Hind and the Panther; and then to read two of the great tragedies. All for Love must be read, but it is not typical, because it is in blank verse and because it bothers us by working on a theme already used by Shakespeare in Antony and Cleopatra. Between the two plays there is no comparison: I do not mean merely the obvious superiority of Shakespeare, because no dramatist can stand comparison with Shakespeare; I mean that we must try not to think of Shakespeare when we read Dryden.[19] If we put Shakespeare's tremendous play out of mind, we can be thrilled by lines of Dryden such as these:

How I loved
Witness ye days and nights, and all ye hours,
That danced away with down upon your feet,
As all your business were to count my passion.
One day passed by, and nothing saw but love;
Another came, and still 'twas only love:
The suns were wearied out with looking on,
And I unfired with loving.
I saw you every day and all the day;
And every day was still but as the first:
So eager was I still to see you more . . .

While within your arms I lay,
The world fell mould'ring from my hands each hour . . .[20]

But one should also read one of his heroic dramas in rhymed couplets. I ought at this point to indicate all the differences between the drama of Dryden and that of Shakespeare: the differences in order that in reading Dryden we may appreciate what he was trying to do, how remote it was from what Shakespeare was trying to do: what not to look for, so that we may find what actually is there. But in these talks I made the mistake of planning much more than I have had the time to execute. So I only suggest reading *Aurungzebe*, keeping in mind that this is not "tragedy" of either Shakespeare or the Greek dramatists, but "heroic drama."[21] Much indeed in Dryden's heroic plays is comedy, as in his satires. He describes for instance the Civic Guards of Rhodes as follows:

> Stout once a month they march, a blust'ring band,
> And ever, but in times of need, at hand;
> This was the morn, when issuing on the guard,
> Drawn up in rank and file they stood prepared
> Of seeming arms to make a short essay,
> Then hasten to be drunk, the business of the day.[22]

And, finally, there is the volume of Dryden's Essays and Prefaces, discussing the nature of drama, of various kinds of poetry and of verse translation; a volume (the Everyman Library include it at two shillings) of some of the finest critical prose in English.][23]

It seems a very long way, indeed, from the age of Donne to the age of Dryden. In literature, as in politics, revolutions never change anything, but gradual transition changes everything. The age of Queen Anne is very alien to the age of Queen Elizabeth.[24] If it is an inferior age, that does not diminish the greatness of the writers who expressed it and who represent it: Dryden, Congreve, Swift, Pope. The arrival of Dryden was no sudden avatar. His way was prepared by Cowley in the odes, by Denham and Waller in the style of the rhymed couplet, in ease and fluidity by Oldham in his occasional vigorous lines in satire; and by Davenant in drama; and by Hobbes in prose writing.[25] But Dryden's greatness consists in his success in taking all these hints; in his sensitiveness to the time, that helped him to create his time; and in his perfecting the various imperfect attempts of others, and making the English language a vehicle for the thought and feeling of a generation. Dryden is, indeed, not unworthy of one of his masters: Virgil;[26] as when he wrote his splendid elegy upon his friend Oldham:

> Farewell, too little and too lately known,
> Whom I began to think and call my own:
> For sure our souls were near allied, and thine
> Cast in the same poetic mould as mine.

One common note on either lyre did strike,
And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike.

Thy generous fruits, though gathered ere their prime,
Still showed a quickness; and maturing time
But mellows what we write to the dull sweets of rhyme.
Once more, hail and farewell! farewell, thou young,
But Ah! too short, Marcellus of our tongue!
Thy brows with ivy and with laurels bound;
But fate and gloomy night encompass thee around.[27]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 8.30 p.m. on Friday 11 Apr as TSE's final talk in a series of six weekly lectures on seventeenth-century literature. Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets. TSE's outline for these talks is presented in "Syllabus for a Course of Six Talks on Seventeenth Century Poetry" (*L4* 449-51).

2. TSE reviewed Mark Van Doren's *The Poetry of John Dryden* (1920) in "John Dryden" (1921) (2.350). On 29 Oct 1930, TSE replied to Gordon Fraser of the Minority Press, declining to write an introduction to a reprint of Van Doren's study: "I should very much like to help the book in every way it is one of the best things about Dryden that I have ever read. But I feel that I have been writing rather too many introductions and prefaces lately, and one's value as an introducer is very easily exhausted by multiplying this work of chairmanship" (*L5* 365). Instead, TSE recommended Bonamy Dobrée, who wrote the introduction for the 1931 Minority Press reprint. Dobree's *Restoration Tragedy, 1660-1720* (1929) was dedicated "To T. S. Eliot." On 6 Jan 1930, TSE wrote to Edith Sitwell to say that he "was looking forward to your" [*Alexander Pope*] (*L5* 19), which was published by Faber.

3. "A Poem upon the Death of Late Highness, Oliver, Lord Protector of England, Scotland, and Ireland [Heroick Stanza's]" (1659), stanzas 12 and 19 (*The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. John Sargeaunt, London: Oxford UP, 1910, 3). TSE modernizes the spelling. All subsequent quotations from Dryden's poetry are from this edition owned by TSE.

4. *Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders, 1666. An Historical Poem* (1667), stanzas 2 and 273 (*Poems of John Dryden*, 24, 43). Dryden's long historical poem celebrates 1666 as a "year of wonders" (*annus mirabilis*), including Britain's naval victory over the Dutch and the "miraculous" preservation of the city of London from the Great Fire of Sept.

5. Poet and playwright Shakerley Marmion (1603-39), author of *The Antiquary* (1641). TSE encountered Chamberlayne and Marmion in vols I (1905) and II (1906) of George Saintsbury's edition of *Minor Poets of the Caroline Period*.

6. For TSE's comments on Cowley's odes [written in imitation of Pindar's style and encomiastic subject matter], see "The Minor Metaphysicals: From Cowley to Dryden" (4.109).

7. “Threnodia Augustalis: A Funeral-Pindarique Poem Sacred to the Happy Memory of King Charles II” (1685), ll. 36-50. *Poems of John Dryden*, 108.

8. In his 1930 introduction to Samuel Johnson’s satires, TSE refers to the eighteenth-century “poetry of sentimental philosophizing – Thomson, Young, Cowper” (4.168).

9. “A Song for St. Cecilia’s Day” (1687), stanza 1 (*Poems of John Dryden*, 196). “Alexander’s Feast” (1697) is also a celebration of the festival day (Nov 22) of St. Cecilia, patroness of music.

10. “The Lady’s Song” (1704), ll. 1-4. *Poems of John Dryden*, 197.

11. Phyllis, a character from Greek mythology, commonly used as the name of a shepherdess in pastoral poetry.

12. For TSE’s earlier reflections on Dryden’s satires *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), and *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), see “John Dryden” (1921) (2.350).

13. In “John Dryden” (1921), TSE compares Dryden’s satire with Pope’s satirical portrait of Addison as “Atticus” in the *Epistle to Dr. Arbuthnot* (1735).

14. In *The Second Part of Absalom and Achitophel* (1682), Dryden’s portraits of Og and Doeg satirize the Whig poets Shadwell and Settle. Dryden says of Doeg that “All his occasions are to eat and drink” (line 424), while the portly drunkard “Og from a treason tavern rowling home” (line 459). Shadwell is the mock-hero of *Mac Flecknoe*.

15. *Absalom and Achitophel*, ll. 529-32, 545-56, 559-62, 154-62. *Poems of John Dryden*, 56, 51.

16. On 18 Mar 1930, TSE accepted Bruce Richmond’s commission to write on Tourneur: “In suggesting that I should write about Tourneur you are exposing me to serious temptation: I want to write about Tourneur more than about any other Elizabethan” (*L5* 121). For this *TLS* article, see “Cyril Tourneur” (4.197).

17. In his introduction to Ezra Pound’s *Selected Poems* (1928), TSE asserts: “Indeed it might be said in our time that the man who cannot enjoy Pope as poetry probably understands no poetry” (3.526-27).

18. 2 Corinthians 3:6: “Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

19. In his seventh Clark lecture, “Cowley and the Transition,” TSE remarks: “compare Dryden’s Antony with Shakespeare’s and you see that poetry has lost much of its flexibility to the variations of life” (2.736). TSE develops this comparison at length in “Dryden the Dramatist” (1931) (4.275).

20. *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost* (1678), II. 282-91, 295-96. TSE quotes these lines in “John Dryden” (1921) (2:356-57).

21. *Aurung-zebe* (1676) is loosely based on the contemporary power struggle involving the Mogul Aurung-Zebe and his father.

22. “Cymon and Iphigenia” (1700), ll. 403-08 (*Poems of John Dryden*, 366); again, TSE quotes these lines in “John Dryden” (1921) (2:354-55).

23. TSE owned a copy of the Everyman’s Library edition of *Dryden’s Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (1912).

24. Queen Anne reigned from 1702 until 1714.

25. TSE follows the genealogy traced by Van Doren in his chapter “The Making of the Poet”: “Dryden grew up at a time when the air was filled with many diverse strains of verse . . . He came to distinguish four forward-looking poets among the throng: Cowley, Waller,

Denham, and Davenant. And behind these Sons of Ben he was able to discern the forward-peering countenance of Hobbes." *The Poetry of John Dryden* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Howe, 1920), 24.

26. Dryden's verse translations of Virgil's works were published in 1697. They reputedly earned him £1200 and were reprinted thirteen times before 1800.

27. "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham" (1684), ll. 1-6, 19-25. *Poems of John Dryden*, 178.

Preface to *Anabasis: A Poem by St.-J. Perse, with a Translation into English by T. S. Eliot*

London: Faber & Faber, 1930. Pp. 75; Preface, 7-11.[1]

I am by no means convinced that a poem like *Anabase* requires a preface at all.[2] It is better to read such a poem six times, and dispense with a preface. But when a poem is presented in the form of a translation, people who have never heard of it are naturally inclined to demand some testimonial. So I give mine hereunder.

Anabase is already well known, not only in France, but in other countries of Europe.[3] One of the best Introductions to the poem is that of the late Hugo von Hofmannsthal, which forms the preface to the German translation.[4] There is another by Valéry Larbaud, which forms the preface to the Russian translation.[5] And there was an informative note by Lucien Fabre in the *Nouvelles Littéraires*.[6]

For myself, once having had my attention drawn to the poem by a friend whose taste I trusted,[7] there was no need for a preface. I did not need to be told, after one reading, that the word *anabasis* has no particular reference to Xenophon or the journey of the Ten Thousand, no particular reference to Asia *Minor*; and that no map of its migrations could be drawn up. Mr. Perse is using the word *anabasis* in the same literal sense in which Xenophon himself used it.[8] The poem is a series of images of migration, of conquest of vast spaces in Asiatic wastes, of destruction and foundation of cities and civilizations of any races or epochs of the ancient East.

I may, I trust, borrow from Mr. Fabre two notions which may be of use to the English reader. The first is that any obscurity of the poem, on first readings, is due to the suppression of "links in the chain," of explanatory and connecting matter, and not to incoherence, or to the love of cryptogram.[9] The justification of such abbreviation of method is that the sequence of images coincides and concentrates into one intense impression of barbaric civilization.[10] The reader has to allow the images to fall into his memory successively without questioning the reasonableness of each at the moment; so that, at the end, a total effect is produced.[11]

Such selection of a sequence of images and ideas has nothing chaotic about it. There is a logic of the imagination as well as a logic of concepts.[12]

People who do not appreciate poetry always find it difficult to distinguish between order and chaos in the arrangement of images; and even those who are capable of appreciating poetry cannot depend upon first impressions. I was not convinced of Mr. Perse's imaginative order until I had read the poem five or six times. And if, as I suggest, such an arrangement of imagery requires just as much "fundamental brain-work" as the arrangement of an argument, it is to be expected that the reader of a poem should take at least as much trouble as a barrister reading an important decision on a complicated case.[13]

I refer to this poem as a poem. It would be convenient if poetry were always verse – either accented, alliterative, or quantitative; but that is not true. Poetry may occur, within a definite limit on one side, at any point along a line of which the formal limits are "verse" and "prose." Without offering any generalized theory about "poetry," "verse" and "prose," I may suggest that a writer, by using, as does Mr. Perse, certain exclusively poetic methods, is sometimes able to write poetry in what is called prose. Another writer can, by reversing the process, write great prose in verse. There are two very simple but insuperable difficulties in any definition of "prose" and "poetry." One is that we have three terms where we need four: we have "verse" and "poetry" on the one side, and only "prose" on the other. The other difficulty follows from the first: that the words imply a valuation in one context which they do not in another. "Poetry" introduces a distinction between good verse and bad verse; but we have no one word to separate bad prose from good prose. As a matter of fact, much bad prose is poetic prose; and only a very small part of bad verse is bad because it is prosaic.

But *Anabase* is poetry. Its sequences, its logic of imagery, are those of poetry and not of prose; and in consequence – at least the two matters are very closely allied – the *declamation*, the system of stresses and pauses, which is partially exhibited by the punctuation and spacing, is that of poetry and not of prose.

The second indication of Mr. Fabre is one which I may borrow for the English reader: a tentative synopsis of the movement of the poem. It is a scheme which may give the reader a little guidance on his first reading; when he no longer needs it he will forget it. The ten divisions of the poem are headed as follows:

I. Arrival of the Conqueror at the site of the city which he is about to build.
II. Tracing the plan of the city.

III. Consultation of augurs.
IV. Foundation of the city.
V. Restlessness towards further explorations and conquests.
VI. Schemes for foundation and conquest.
VII. Decision to fare forth.
VIII. March through the desert.
IX. Arrival at the threshold of a great new country.
X. Acclamation, festivities, repose. Yet the urge towards another departure, this time with the mariner.[14]

And I believe that this is as much as I need to say about Perse's *Anabasis*. I believe that this is a piece of writing of the same importance as the later work of Mr. James Joyce, as valuable as *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. And this is a high estimate indeed.[15]

I have two words to add, one about the author, the other about the translation. The author of this poem is, even in the most practical sense, an authority on the Far East; he has lived there, as well as in the tropics.[16] As for the translation, it would not be even so satisfactory as it is, if the author had not collaborated with me to such an extent as to be half-translator. What inaccuracies remain are due to my own wilfulness, and not to my ignorance, which the author has corrected; and not to the author's ignorance, for he has, I can testify, a sensitive and intimate knowledge of the English language, as well as a mastery of his own.[17]

T. S. ELIOT

"NOTE TO REVISED EDITION" (1949)

Since the first publication, nineteen years ago, of the text of *Anabase* together with my translation, this and other poems of the author have extended his reputation far beyond the bounds of his own country. St.-John Perse is a name known to everyone, I think, who is seriously concerned with contemporary poetry in America. It has therefore seemed high time that the translation should be revised and corrected.

When this translation was made, St.-John Perse was little known outside of France. The translator, perhaps for the reason that he was introducing the poem to the English-speaking public, was then concerned, here and there, less with rendering the exact sense of a phrase, than with coining some phrase in English which might have equivalent value; he may even have taken liberties in the interest of originality, and sometimes interposed his own idiom between author and reader. But (to revert to the first person) I have always refused to publish the translation except in this way, *en regard*[18] with the French text. Its purpose is only to assist the English-speaking reader who wishes to approach the French text. The method of the author, his syntax and his rhythm, are original; his vocabulary includes some unusual words; and the translation may still serve its purpose. But at this stage it was felt that a greater fidelity to the exact meaning, a more literal translation, was what was needed. I have corrected not only my own licences, but several positive errors and mistakes. In this revision I have depended heavily upon the recommendations of the author, whose increasing mastery of English has enabled him to detect faults previously unobserved, and upon the assistance of Mr. John Hayward, to whom also I wish to make acknowledgment.

T. S. ELIOT

"NOTE TO THE THIRD EDITION" (1959)

The alterations to the English text of this edition have been made by the author himself, and tend to make the translation more literal than in previous editions.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The French text and English translation are printed on facing pages.

TSE began to translate *Anabase* in 1926. He sent a complete translation to the author Saint-John Perse, the pseudonym of the diplomat Alexis Léger (1887-1975), on 15 Jan 1927. However, publication was delayed for three years as TSE waited for Léger's response to his questions about certain passages, which did not arrive until Aug 1929. TSE published the first section of his translation in the *Criterion* for Feb 1928 (137-38), but the whole poem was not published until 22 May 1930. Later editions, containing further corrections by Léger, were published in 1938 (by Harcourt, Brace & Co., the first American edition) and 1949 (the second American edition) and by Faber in 1959.

2. On 15 Jan 1927, TSE wrote to Léger: "je crois que je pourrais écrire une petite préface qui présenterait mieux votre poème aux lecteurs anglais," adding "Le poème me semble un des plus grands et plus singuliers des temps modernes" (*L3* 373). *Trans*: "I think I could write a short preface which would better introduce your poem to English readers," adding "The poem seems to me one of the greatest and most unusual of modern times."

3. *Anabase* was first published in *La Nouvelle Revue française* in Jan 1924 (46-62).

4. Hugo von Hofmannsthal's essay first appeared in *Neue Schweizer Rundschau* in May 1929 and was reprinted under the title "Émancipation du lyrisme français" in *Commerce* (summer 1929). It was originally intended as the introduction for the German translation by Bernard

Groethuysen and Walter Benjamin scheduled for publication in 1929, but it was suspended at Perse's request. This translation did not appear until 1950.

5. Valéry Larbaud's "Préface pour une traduction russe d'*Anabase*" appeared in *La Nouvelle Revue française*, 148 (Jan 1926), 64-67. It was included in G. Adamovitch and G. Ivanoff's Russian translation published in Paris in 1926.

6. A review of *Anabase* by Lucien Fabre (1889-1952) appeared in *Les Nouvelles littéraires* (23 Aug 1924), 4.

7. TSE was encouraged to translate *Anabase* by his cousin Marguerite Caetani, Princess Bassiano, who agreed to cover Faber's production costs. Caetani was founder of the Parisian literary review *Commerce*, which in Nov 1924 published Perse's translation of the first part of TSE's "The Hollow Men." On 2 Sept 1929, TSE told Léger that "it was Madame de Bassiano who first brought me to study and admire your poem" (*L4* 602).

8. The OED defines "anabasis" as "a military advance; the title of the advance by Cyrus the Younger into Asia, as narrated by Xenophon." Xenophon's *Anabasis* tells the story of the march of 10,000 Greeks into the heart of the Persian Empire in the early fourth century BC. On 4 Apr 1905, TSE informed the headmaster of Milton Academy: "I read Xenophon's *Anabasis* Books I-IV, with *Hellenica* at sight last year" (*L1* 5).

9. Fabre describes the obscurity of some modern French poets as being due to the "suppression d'un nombre considérable de maillons aux chaînes logiques habituelles." *Trans*: "suppression of a considerable number of links in the chain of the usual logic" (4). On 24 June 1930, TSE gently chided Virginia Woolf: "As for *Ash Wednesday* and *Anabasis*, I do not consider that you are in a position to gibe at my obscurity" (*L5* 229). On 17 Oct 1930, TSE thanked Arthur Wheen for his praise of *Anabasis*, adding: "most reviewers found it too obscure to be able to say anything about it at all" (*L5* 352).

10. On 11 May 1931, TSE told Auden that *The Orators* "seems to me to have lumps of undigested St. Jean Perse in it," adding: "I admire your success with the Perse method, which I should not have believed possible, but I think it still needs a further process of purification" (*L5* 568).

11. On 27 Sept 1926, TSE told Marguerite Caetani that he had found translating *Anabase* "more difficult than I thought at first, because the idea (and there decidedly is one) is conveyed by a cumulative succession of images" (*L3* 282).

12. On 17 Oct 1930, TSE wrote to Arthur Wheen denying that his conception of the "logic of the imagination" was related to a passage in Coleridge's *Table Talk*, adding: "Nor am I quite sure, to tell the truth, what I meant myself; and it is rather on my conscience that I must find the time to enquire" (*L5* 353).

13. On 8 Mar 1881, Dante Gabriel Rossetti wrote to Hall Caine: "Conception, my boy, *fundamental brain-work* – that is what makes the difference in all art." *His Family-Letters, with a Memoir by William Michael Rossetti*, vol 1 (London: Ellis and Elvey, 1895), 417.

14. Fabre's original headings are as follows: "I. Arrivée du conquérant sur l'emplacement de la ville qu'il va fonder. II. Tracé de l'enceinte. III. Consultation des devins. IV. Fondation de la ville. V. Nostalgie de nouveaux espaces. VI. Projets d'établissement et de fortune. VII. Décision d'un nouveau départ. VIII. Marche dans les déserts. IX. Arrivée au seuil d'un grand pays. X. Accueil, fêtes, repos. Mais la soif de partir de nouveau; et cette fois avec le navigateur" (4).

15. TSE was responsible for the publication of Joyce's *Anna Livia Plurabelle: Fragment of "Work in Progress"* in 1930 as No. 15 in Faber & Faber's Criterion Miscellany pamphlet series. In early Dec 1929, TSE thanked Herbert Read for his praise of *Anabasis*, explaining: "I think it is a big thing myself – as important as *Anna Livia Plurabelle* – but there *is* considerable loss in the translation – which I have tried to compensate as far as possible by drawing on the greater resources of our language – but what Léger has done with French is prodigious" (*L4* 691).

16. Léger was born in Guadeloupe in the French West Indies where he spent his childhood. Since 1914 Léger was a member of the French diplomatic service. He was a secretary to the French Embassy in Peking (1916-21) when he wrote *Anabase*.

17. On 2 Sept 1929, TSE told Léger: "your revision of my translation makes evident that you know English much more intimately than I know French," adding "You will find that I have used *most* of your suggestions. Where I have not, it has been usually for some reason of rhythm, or for *compensation*: that is to say, trying to supply by a richness of association of the word in English in one place, a richness of the word in French in another place which could not there be conveyed" (*L4* 601-02). On 11 Nov 1936, TSE informed Georges Cattaui that Léger is the "best translator in Paris," explaining: "He worked with me on my translation of his *Anabase*, to the vast improvement of my version, and has also translated a few things of mine into French." TSE gave the manuscript of his translation, containing Léger's annotations, to the Bodleian Library, Oxford (Ms. Don. C. 23/2-3).

18. *en regard*: on the opposite page

Message to the Anglo-Catholic Congress in London[1]

The Sunday Referee (29 June 1930), Special Supplement[2]

There is no doubt a large public which is indifferent, there is a much smaller public which is hostile, and there is another public which is rejoiced, when the Anglo-Catholic Congress takes place. To my mind the value of these congresses will prove to be, in time, still more for the first two categories than for the third: the first will learn that there is something to think about, the second that there is something which it has thought mistakenly about. The third, we need to remember, consists not only of those who take part in the worship and in the instruction, but of a great many others, scattered about the country, who cannot take part, but who must be helped and encouraged in their missionary work of example and steadfastness, by knowing that such a congress is taking place.

NOTES

1. The Catholic movement within the Church of England led to the first Anglo-Catholic Congress in 1920, with successive Congresses in 1923 and 1927. Among the declarations of the Congress in the early years was the truth of the doctrine of Incarnation, its expression in the Eucharist, and the reservation of that sacrament in the tabernacle.

2. On 17 June 1930, in response to a request for a message of "100 words on 'where we are going?,'" TSE sent the text of this message to Rev. Desmond Morse-Boycott for inclusion in a Special Supplement of the *Sunday Referee* for the Fourth Anglo-Catholic Congress in London (*L5* 220-21). Under the presidency of the Rt. Rev. Dr. Roscow Shedden, Bishop of Nassau, the Congress opened on 29 June with an open-air High Mass at Stamford Bridge football ground, Chelsea, followed by sessions in the Royal Albert Hall through 6 July.

Second Message to the Anglo-Catholic Congress[1]

The Congress Daily Chronicle (30 June 1930) 8

I should like to mention, as a layman – and I think it is a suggestion which can be made most forcibly by a layman – that there is one way in which these Congresses are very valuable, which appeals to me particularly. I am thinking of the numbers of Catholics scattered about the land who have not the benefit of a Catholic parish, or of a church in which they can find their own form of worship, or of a priest who can give them guidance and counsel. There are not only those who have known these advantages, and have then been obliged to move away to more isolated parts of England, but also those who have never had them; and even those who have never had the opportunity wholly to discover their own true thought and feeling. Such people – how many or how few of them there are, I have no means of knowing – can do as much for the dissemination of the Faith as any of us among the laity, and should be the object of particular concern. No doubt many of them are helped by the publications of the Catholic Literature Association, and I trust that many more will come to know these publications.[2] But an annual event like the Congress should have a special significance for these people, whether they are able to attend it or not; even to read about it, and know that it is taking place, should support them in their loneliness and sustain their efforts in their immediate environment.

It has, I believe, sometimes been an objection that the contributions to past Congresses have been too difficult and intellectual. For my part, I hope that they may never be less so. The Christian Faith is a difficult subject: a man can acquire intellectual comprehension only to the limit of his own capacities; but all of us should face the necessity of effort – effort both of mental and spiritual discipline. We are opposed, surely, to a modern laxity in religion which is determined to ask as little of its adherents, both of their minds and of their souls and of their practical conduct, as it can; and I believe that the more the Church asks of the faithful, in every way, the more it will receive.

I started out to send a message to the Congress. But I find that my "message," such as it is, is rather to those who cannot attend the Congress or any part of it: a message that nevertheless they have reason to be thankful that the Congress is taking place.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In response to an invitation from editor Kenneth Ingram, TSE wrote on 10 Apr 1930 to say that he felt "honoured by being asked to send a message to the Congress, to which I look forward. . . . Could you show me please any samples of 'messages'? I think I can give you what you want, if I know what you want. But I am rather a bungler at such matters" (*L5* 137). Ingram replied that he "would much prefer that these messages were personal rather than formal"; on 30 Apr he sent his thanks on receipt of the typescript: "It will do excellently and could not, I think, be improved." He then wrote an editorial preface for the text: "*(We have much pleasure in including this 'message' from one who holds so prominent a place in the literary world of to-day, as a writer both of prose and of verse.)*" TSE subsequently agreed (*L5* 220) to write another message to the Congress for publication in a special supplement to the *Sunday Referee*, which appeared a day earlier (4.138).

2. The Catholic Literature Association of the Anglo-Catholic Congress had as its publishing objective "the spreading of knowledge of the Catholic Faith, and the issue of Catholic doctrine and devotion." After attending sessions of the Congress, TSE wrote to Ms K. F. Summers on 4 July to decline an invitation to join the Executive Committee of the Association, explaining: "I was very much tempted to accept, but the truth is that I have so many irons in the fire at present that I could not give the time necessary; and I very much dislike being a merely nominal member of anything" (*L5* 237).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 9 (July 1930) 587-90

THE PLACE OF ROBERT BRIDGES

Whatever nomination be made to the Laureateship, which at our moment of writing is still vacant, the discussions in the press about the "logical" successor to Dr. Bridges imply a very positive tribute to the late Laureate. The journalistic flutter of curiosity over his successor owes its interest largely to the fact that Bridges, in his very different way, raised the Laureateship to a dignity which it had not had since the most triumphant days of Tennyson. Even Wordsworth, by the time he attained that honour, hardly added to its lustre.[1] After Tennyson, Dr. Bridges did more than any incumbent to increase the distinction conferred upon him. And it is no disparagement of any possible successor, but merely a recognition of the late Laureate's particular gifts and even limitations, to say that there is no one living who can occupy that office with so much grace as its late tenant.

For indeed, his combination of gifts were exactly the right ones; and in this context the memory of the late Earl of Oxford and Asquith who nominated him, must also be honoured.[2] There could have been no reason for Bridges's nomination except that he was a poet. When he became Laureate he not only increased the eminence of the post, but at the same time raised and maintained the estimation of poetry as a dignified occupation even in the modern world. One feeling which we are sure all other practitioners of verse had for Bridges is the feeling of respect; and when so unanimous, that is a very fine feeling to inspire. There are living poets of every generation who are more popular; there are probably living poets who will be more read a century hence; but there is no poet of any generation who could so well have represented the dignity and difficulty of poetry. Some readers prefer his earlier lyrical verse to most of his later and more ambitious experimentation; but whether this taste is later confirmed or not, it is certain that his "experimentation" has served a valuable purpose. It has helped to accustom readers of verse to a more liberal conception of verse technique, and to the notion that the development of technique is a serious and unceasing subject of study among verse writers; it has helped to protect other versifiers of less prestige, against the charge of being just "rebels" or "freaks"; or as a writer in *The Morning Post* some years ago nicely named them, "literary Bolsheviks."[3] Dr. Bridges, to his honour and to our benefit, was as much of a "crank" as anyone; even in his archaicisms he was an innovator; the Yattendon Hymnal must not be forgotten, nor his interest in old music, in language reform, in younger poets, in many things that the ordinary Briton regards with suspicion; and even those poets who feel that they owe nothing to him directly, and who cannot join the chorus of praise over *The Testament of Beauty*, have reason to bless his memory.[4]

REFLEXIONS ON OUR CAPITALIST PRESS: INSURANCE AND CIRCUSES

A recent event in the newspaper world seems to express a need much more urgent than that of a Poet Laureate: the need for a new newspaper peer. When the *Daily Mail* and the *Daily Express* are represented in the higher house, can a Labour Government justly allow the *Daily Herald* no voice in that over populated and never filled Chamber?[5] We do not suggest Viscount Lansbury; some more Zeus-like figure may be found than that jovial frequenter of swings, roundabouts and sand piles.[6] But the circulation, now so proudly advertised, of the *Herald*, demands instantly at least a Baron.[7] Possibly one solution would be the creation – for which the present government could take the whole credit – of a third chamber of superpeers, such peers to be elevated or degraded in rank according to the fluctuation of relative circulation; such provisional dignity being an additional incitement to give the people what it wants in the way of insurance, competitions, divorces, society weddings, aviation, football, serials, and interviews of Mr. Bernard Shaw with juvenile Hollywood stars.

FATE OF THE LABOUR PARTY

The complicity of all parties in the race to give the people what it wants, and to compromise on everything, has become a comedy not yet fully enjoyed. Thus Mr. Lansbury, hastily summoned from East London to visit the Roman Wall, has the warmest sympathy both with the National Preservation Trust and with Mr. Wake whose aim is to reduce unemployment by quarrying in a capitalist way.[8] Thus we are to treat various headstrong murmuring childish peoples with the greatest respect for their sovereign independence and liberty, and at the same time to do our best to protect our mill owners, mill workers and traders, as well as to prevent these equal peoples, equal to ourselves, from oppressing and murdering each other and sundry minor peoples and untouchables not yet equal to themselves and to us. Thus we must at one and the same time tax "those who can best afford it" and keep the City in a good humour.[9] Thus we must give everybody the vote and at the same time provide against anybody having a mind of his own. We must be conservative about obscenity and liberal about blasphemy. We must marry according to the prescriptions of the Church, but we may divorce in contradiction to them. We must wheedle and coax the Dominions to accept our goods which are almost as good as those provided by Germany and the United States; and we must, in the name of economy, decline to help the Crown Colonies to go on producing sugar if we can get it more cheaply elsewhere (vide Lord Olivier's report and correspondence).[10] We must support the maximum population by the dole but we must not encourage them to make lace.[11] We must profess Free Trade but protect the Motor Car Industry. And this is what is complacently worshipped as the great British instinct for Compromise. If that is the test, then the present government is certainly as true blue as any government Britain has ever had.

The danger of such a policy is that everyone who believes in principles rather than compromise will be driven in spite of himself into extremity, either of Toryism or Communism. It will soon be evident that there are only two classes: those who have in common the spirit of "compromise", and those who have in common the spirit of principle, in other words, Tories and Communists. We dislike using the term "Tory," because such public men as Mr. Churchill and Lord Birkenhead are called Tories; and we dislike using the term Communist, because such public men as Mr. Lansbury have been called Communists.[12] But our present danger is that our public men will be divided into trimmers and men of principle;[13] that men of principle, men who refuse to listen to that siren song that the true spirit of Britain is "the spirit of compromise," must become either extreme Tories or extreme Communists, with (no doubt) a respect for each other that they cannot feel for the trimmers, and perhaps in consequence a sense of moral relief at having something positive to fight. There is a very practical sense in which it is possible to "love one's enemies"; and the Tory of to-morrow and the Communist of to-morrow will perhaps love each other better than they can love the politicians.[14]

NOTES

1. Bridges died on 21 Apr. Tennyson had been Poet Laureate from 1850 to 1892, succeeding Wordsworth, who had been appointed to the office in 1843 at the age of seventy-three.

2. British Prime Minister, Herbert Henry Asquith, first earl of Oxford (1852-1928).

3. E. B. Osborn in "Certain American Poets: The Bolshevist Touch," *Morning Post* (28 May 1920), 4.

4. In 1895, Bridges collaborated with Harry Ellis Wooldridge on a collection of hymns, *The Yattendol Hymnal*. TSE comments on Bridges's *The Testament of Beauty* (1929) in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Jan 1930 (5-6n7).

5. TSE refers to Harold Harmsworth, first Viscount Rothermere (1868-1940), proprietor of the *Daily Mail*, and William Maxwell Aitken, first Baron Beaverbrook (1879-1964), proprietor of the *Daily Express*.

6. George Lansbury (1859-1940), later leader of the Labour Party, was from 1912 to 1922 editor and proprietor of the *Daily Herald*. In Feb 1930, in his cabinet post as First Commissioner of Works in Ramsay MacDonald's second Labour government, the *Times* reported Lansbury's visits to children's playground facilities in the Royal Parks of London.

7. In the early 1930s, the circulation of the *Daily Herald* topped two million.

8. On 15 and 17 Apr, the *Times* reported moves to pass an Act of Parliament to safeguard Hadrian's Wall (parts of which were under National Trust control) from a nearby whinstone quarry, which a Mr. F. Wake proposed to extend.

9. In order to allay a run on the pound, bankers in the City of London were pressing for measures to balance Britain's budget deficit, principally by increased taxation.

10. A government report on the West Indian sugar industry, chaired by the Labour politician Sydney Haldane, Baron Olivier (1859-1943), argued for the retention of the existing preferential trade agreement between Britain and the Colonies supported by tariffs and subsidies.

11. The dole was the popular name in Britain for the unemployment relief introduced since World War I.

12. Winston Churchill (1874-1965), Conservative MP and future Prime Minister, and Frederick Edwin Smith, first earl of Birkenhead (1872-1930), lawyer and Lord Chancellor during Lloyd George's coalition government (1919-22). Lansbury was sometimes portrayed as an extremist on the left wing of the Labour Party.

13. Trimmers: politicians who change their opinions to suit the needs of the moment, a term applied to English politicians in the late seventeenth century by George Savile, Lord Halifax, who had his followers figuratively trim their sails to prevailing political winds, as delineated in his pamphlet *The Character of a Trimmer* (1688). For TSE's remarks on Charles Whibley's essay on Lord Halifax entitled "The Trimmer," see "Charles Whibley" (1931) (4.386-87).

14. Matthew 5:44: "Love your enemies; bless them that curse you."

Introduction to *The Wheel of Fire: Essays in Interpretation of Shakespeare's Sombre Tragedies* by G. Wilson Knight

London: Oxford UP, 1930. Pp. xix + 296; Introduction, xi-xix.[1]

It has taken me a long time to recognize the justification of what Mr. Wilson Knight calls "interpretation."[2] In my previous scepticism I am quite ready to admit the presence of elements of pure prejudice, as well as of some which I defend. I have always maintained, not only that Shakespeare was not a philosophical poet in the sense of Dante and Lucretius; but also, what may be more easily overlooked, that "philosophical poets" like Dante and Lucretius are not really philosophers at all. They are poets who have presented us with the emotional and sense equivalent for a definite philosophical system constructed by a philosopher – even though they may sometimes take little liberties with the system. To say that Shakespeare is not a philosophical poet like these is not to say anything very striking or important.[3] It is more worth while to point out that my notion of Dante or Lucretius as providing the "emotional equivalent" for a philosophical system expressed by some one else, is not to be pressed to a literal point for point parallelism, as in the old theory of mind and body. The poet has something to say which is not even necessarily implicit in the system, something which is also over and above the verbal beauty. In other words, the pattern of Cyrene or that of the Schools is not the whole of the pattern of the carpet of Lucretius or of Dante.[4] This other part of the pattern is something to be found in the work of other great poets than those who are "philosophical" – I say of other, not of all – for that would exclude Horace or Dryden or Malherbe.[5] It is also to be found in the work of some (again, not of all) of the greatest novelists: certainly of George Eliot, and of Henry James who gave the phrase its currency.[6] And of this sort of "pattern" the most elaborate, the most extensive, and probably the most inscrutable is that of the plays of Shakespeare. For one thing, in Dante the pattern is interwoven chiefly with the systematic pattern which he set himself, and the mystery and excitement lies in trying to trace its relations and differences – the relation, and the personal variations in another mode, between for example the Thomist doctrine of Love, the poetic Provençal tradition, and the direct experience of Dante with its modifications under philosophical and literary influences. But the philosophic pattern is far more a help than a hindrance, it is indeed *a priori* a help. Furthermore, Dante in his kind of poetry was doing exactly what he liked with his own material; and the practical exigencies of a badly paid playwright, popular entertainer, sometimes actor, and sometimes busy producer, can only confuse us in our study of Shakespeare. Then again, with Dante the philosophic system gives us a kind of criterion of *consciousness*, and the letter to Can Grande confirms it;[7] just as of a lesser writer, but no less genuine a pattern-maker, Henry James, we have some gauge of consciousness in his very nearness to us in time and civilization, in the authors he studied and the constant play of his criticism upon his own work. But with Shakespeare we seem to be moving in an air of Cimmerian darkness.[8] The conditions of his life, the conditions under which dramatic art was then possible, seem even more remote from us than those of Dante. We dare not treat him as completely isolated from his contemporary dramatists, as we can largely isolate Dante. We see his contemporaries for the most part as busy hack writers of untidy genius, sharing a particular sense of the tragic mood: this sense, such as it is, merging into the mere sense of what the public wanted. They confuse us by the fact that what at first appears to be their "philosophy of life" sometimes turns out to be only a felicitous but shameless lifting of a passage from almost any author, as those of Chapman from Erasmus.[9] This, indeed, is a habit which Shakespeare shares; he has his Montaigne, his Seneca, and his Machiavelli or his Anti-Machiavel like the others.[10] And they adapted, collaborated, and overlaid each other to the limits of confusion.

Nevertheless, they do seem, the best of Shakespeare's contemporaries, to have more or less faint or distinct patterns. (I was tempted to use the word "secret" as an alternative to "pattern," but that I remembered the unlucky example of Matthew Arnold, who said much about the "secret of Jesus," a secret which having been revealed only and finally to Arnold himself, turned out to be a pretty poor secret after all.)[11] In Marlowe, surely, we feel the search for one; in Chapman a kind of blundering upon one; in Jonson the one clear and distinct, slight but much more serious than it looks, pattern. There is something in the *Revenger's Tragedy*, but one play does not make a pattern; and Middleton completely baffles me; and as for Ford and Shirley, I suspect them of belonging to that class of poets not unknown to any age, which has all of the superficial qualities, and none of the internal organs, of poetry. But a study of these dramatists and his danger of working into the essence of Shakespeare what is just convention and the dodges of an overworked and underpaid writer; the danger of studying him together with his contemporaries is the danger of reducing a unique vision to a mode.

I once affirmed that Dante made great poetry out of a great philosophy of life; and that Shakespeare made equally great poetry out of an inferior and muddled philosophy of life.[12] I see no reason to retract that assertion: but I ought to elucidate it. When I say "great poetry" I do not suggest that there is a pure element in poetry, the right use of words and cadences, which the real amateur of poetry can wholly isolate to enjoy. The real amateur of poetry, certainly, enjoys, is thrilled by, uses of words which to the untrained reader seem prosaic. I would say that *only* the real amateur of poetry, perhaps, if this is not too presumptuous, only the real practitioner, can enjoy a great deal of poetry which the untrained reader dismisses as clever paraphrase of prose; certainly, to enjoy Pope, to have an analytic enough mind to enjoy even *second* rate eighteenth-century poetry, is a better test of "love of poetry" than to like Shakespeare, which is no test at all:[13] I can tell nothing from the fact that you enjoy Shakespeare, unless I know exactly *how* you enjoy him. But "the greatest poetry," like the greatest prose, has a doubleness; the poet is talking to you on two planes at once. So I mean not merely that Shakespeare had as refined a sense for words as Dante; but that he also has this doubleness of speech.

Now it is only a personal prejudice of mine, that I prefer poetry with a clear philosophical pattern, if it has the other pattern as well, to poetry like Shakespeare's. But this preference means merely a satisfaction of more of my own needs, not a judgement of superiority or even a statement that I *enjoy* it more as poetry. I like a definite and dogmatic philosophy, preferably a Christian and Catholic one, but alternatively that of Epicurus or of the Forest Philosophers of India;[14] and it does not seem to me to obstruct or diminish either the "poetry" or the other pattern. Among readers, probably both types, that of Dante and that of Shakespeare, suffer equal transformation. Dante will be taken as a mere paraphraser of Aquinas, occasionally bursting through his rigid frame into such scenes as Paolo and Francesca,[15] but neither by his admirers nor by his detractors credited with anything like the freedom of Shakespeare. Shakespeare will be still worse traduced, in being attributed with some patent system of philosophy of his own, esoteric guide to conduct, yoga-breathing or key to the scriptures.[16] Thus are the planes of order and pattern confounded.

It is also the prejudice or preference of any one who practises, though humbly, the art of verse, to be sceptical of all "interpretations" of poetry, even his own interpretations; and to rely upon his sense of power and accomplishment in language to guide him. And certainly people ordinarily incline to suppose that in order to enjoy a poem it is necessary to "discover its meaning"; so that their minds toil to discover a meaning, a meaning which they can expound to any one who will listen, in order to prove that they enjoy it. But for one thing the possibilities of meaning of "meaning" in poetry are so extensive, that one is quite aware that one's knowledge of the meaning even of what oneself has written is extremely limited, and that its meaning to others, at least so far as there is some consensus of interpretation among persons apparently qualified to interpret, is quite as much a part of it as what it means to oneself.[17] But when the meaning assigned is too clearly formulated, then one reader who has grasped *a* meaning of a poem may happen to appreciate it less exactly, enjoy it less intensely, than another person who has the discretion not to inquire too insistently. So, finally, the sceptical practitioner of verse tends to limit his criticism of poetry to the appreciation of vocabulary and syntax, the analysis of line, metric and cadence; to stick as closely to the more trustworthy senses as possible.

Or rather, tends to *try* to do this. For this exact and humble appreciation is only one ideal never quite arrived at or even so far as approximated consistently maintained. The restless demon in us drives us also to "interpret" whether we will or not; and the question of the meaning of "interpretation" is a very pretty problem for Mr. I. A. Richards, with which neither Mr. Wilson Knight nor myself in this context can afford to be too narrowly concerned. But our impulse to interpret a work of art (by "work of art" I mean here rather the work of one artist as a whole) is exactly as imperative and fundamental as our impulse to interpret the universe by metaphysics. Though we are never satisfied by any metaphysic, yet those who insist dogmatically upon the impossibility of knowledge of the universe, or those who essay to prove to us that the term "universe" is meaningless, meet, I think, with a singularly unanimous rejection by those who are curious about the universe; and their counsels fall more flat than the flimsiest constructions of metaphysics. And Bradley's apothegm that "metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct; but to find these reasons is no less an instinct," applies as precisely to the interpretation of poetry.[18]

To interpret, then, or to seek to pounce upon the secret, to elucidate the pattern and pluck out the mystery, of a poet's work, is "no less an instinct."[19]

Nor is the effort altogether vain; for as the study of philosophy, and indeed the surrendering ourselves, with adequate knowledge of other systems, to some system of our own or of some one else, is as needful part of a man's life as falling in love or making any contract, so is it necessary to surrender ourselves to some interpretation of the poetry we like. (In my own experience, a writer needs less to "interpret" the work of some minor poet who has influenced him, and whom he has assimilated, than the work of those poets who are too big for any one wholly to assimilate. But I dare say that if one was as great a poet as Shakespeare, and was also his "spiritual heir," one would feel no need to interpret him; interpretation is necessary perhaps only in so far as one is passive, not creative oneself.)

And I do not mean that *nothing* solid and enduring can be arrived at in interpretation: but to me it seems that there must be, as a matter of fact, in every effort of interpretation, some part which can be accepted and necessarily also some part which other readers can reject. I believe that there is a good deal in the interpretation of Shakespeare by Mr. Wilson Knight which can stand indefinitely for other people; and it would be a waste of time for me to pronounce judicially on the two elements in Mr. Knight's work. For that would be merely a reinterpretation of my own; and the reader will have to perform that operation for himself anyway. But I confess that reading his essays seems to me to have enlarged my understanding of the Shakespeare pattern; which, after all, is quite the main thing. It happened, fortunately for myself, that when I read some of his papers I was mulling over some of the later plays, particularly *Pericles*, *Cymbeline*, and the *Winter's Tale*; and reading the later plays for the first time in my life as a separate group, I was impressed by what seemed to me important and very serious recurrences of mood and theme.[20] The old theory, current in my youth, of a Shakespeare altering and deteriorating his form and style to suit a new romantic taste, would not do;[21] or if Shakespeare did this, then it became a remarkable coincidence that he should be able in middle life to turn about and give the public what it wanted – if these strange plays could conceivably be what any public would want – and at the same time remain steadfast in such integrity of exploration. And the mastery of language, I was sure, was quite undiminished.

To take Shakespeare's work as a whole, no longer to single out several plays as the greatest, and mark the others only as apprenticeship or decline – is I think an important and positive step in modern Shakespeare interpretation. More particularly, I think that Mr. Wilson Knight has shown insight in pursuing his search for the pattern below the level of "plot" and "character."[22] There are plots and there are characters: the question of "sources" has its rights, and we must, if we go into the matter at all, inform ourselves of the exact proportion of invention, borrowing, and adaptation in the plot; and so far as possible we must separate the lines written by Shakespeare from those written by collaborators, or taken over from an earlier hand or interpolated by a later.[23] This sort of work must be done to prepare for the search for the real pattern. But I think that Mr. Knight, among other things, has insisted upon the right way to interpret poetic drama. The writer of poetic drama is not merely a man skilled in two arts and skilful to weave them in together; he is not a writer who can decorate a play with poetic language and metre. His task is different from that of the "dramatist" or that of the "poet," for his pattern is more complex and more dimensional; and with the subtraction which I have noted above, that Dante's pattern is the richer by a serious philosophy, and Shakespeare's the poorer by a rag-bag philosophy, I should say that Shakespeare's pattern was more complex, and his problem more difficult, than Dante's. The genuine poetic drama must, at its best, observe all the regulations of the plain drama, but will weave them *organically* (to mix a metaphor and to borrow for the occasion a modern word) into a much richer design. But our first duty as either critics or "interpreters," surely, must be to try to grasp the whole design, and read *character* and *plot* in the understanding of this subterrene or submarine music. Here I say Mr. Knight has pursued the right line for his own plane of investigation, not hypostasizing "character" and "plot." For Shakespeare is one of the rarest of dramatic poets, in that each of his characters is most nearly adequate both to the requirements of the real world and to those of the poet's world. If we can apprehend this balance in *Pericles*, we can come to apprehend it even in Goneril and Regan. And here Mr. Knight seems to me to be very helpful, in expressing the results of the passive, and more critical, poetic understanding.[24]

My fear is, that both what I say in this prefatory way, and what Mr. Wilson Knight has to say, may be misunderstood. It is a little irony that when a poet, like Dante, sets out with a definite philosophy and a sincere determination to guide conduct, his philosophical and ethical pattern is discounted, and our interpreters insist upon the pure poetry which is to be disassociated from this reprehensible effort to do us good. And that when a poet like Shakespeare, who has no "philosophy" and apparently no design upon the amelioration of our behaviour, sets forth his experience and reading of life, he is forthwith saddled with a "philosophy" of his own and some esoteric hints towards conduct.[25] So we kick against those who wish to guide us, and insist on being guided by those who only aim to show us a vision, a dream if you like, which is beyond good and evil in the common sense. It is all a question of our willingness to pursue any path to the end. For the very Catholic philosophy of Dante, with its stern judgement of morals, leads us to the same point beyond good and evil as the pattern of Shakespeare. Morality, we need to be told again and again, is not itself to be judged by moral standards: its laws are as "natural" as any discovered by Einstein or Planck: which is expounded by, among others, Piccarda.[26] Well: we must settle these problems for ourselves, provisionally, as well as we can.

Without pursuing that curious and obscure problem of the meaning of interpretation farther, it occurs to me as possible that there may be an essential part of error in all interpretation, without which it would not be interpretation at all: but this line of thought may be persevered in by students of *Appearance and Reality*. Another point, more immediately relevant, is that in a work of art, as truly as anywhere, reality only exists in and through appearances. I do not think that Mr. Wilson Knight himself, or Mr. Colin Still in his interesting book on *The Tempest* called *Shakespeare's Mystery Play*, has fallen into the error of presenting the work of Shakespeare as a series of mystical treatises in cryptogram, to be filed away once the cipher is read; poetry is poetry, and the surface is as marvellous as the core.[27] A mystical treatise is at best a poor substitute for the original experience of its author; and a poem, or the life's work of a poet, is a very different document from that. The work of Shakespeare is like life itself something to be lived through. If we lived it completely we should need no interpretation; but on our plane of appearances our interpretations themselves are a part of our living.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE was invited to write this introduction by Gerard Hopkins of Oxford UP in Dec 1929 after recommending Knight's collection of essays for publication. It was drafted Apr-May 1930 and published on 25 July. On 22 May, TSE wrote to Charles Williams that he had intended to write "a somewhat prophylactic introduction" (*L5* 196). In "T. S. Eliot: Some Literary Impressions," Knight stated that TSE's introduction "was not written from the standpoint of the essays themselves; it engaged in complications which I, rightly or wrongly, do not feel to be necessary; but the status which it gave, and still gives, my life's work has been invaluable." *T. S. Eliot: The Man and his Work*, ed. Allen Tate (London: Chatto & Windus, 1967), 246.

2. G. Wilson Knight (1897-1985), since 1925 Master of the Dean Close School, became Chancellors' Professor of English at Trinity College, Toronto University in 1931. He was the author of over twenty critical books, thirteen on Shakespeare.

"Interpretation," Knight remarked, "tends to merge into the work it analyses; it attempts, as far as possible, to understand its subject in the light of its own nature, employing external reference, if at all, only as a preliminary to understanding; it avoids discussion of merits, and, since its existence depends entirely on its original acceptance of the validity of the poetic unit which it claims, in some measure, to translate into discursive reasoning, it can recognize no division of 'good' from 'bad'" (1).

3. On 25 May 1930, TSE wrote to Knight: "I do not think that the 'core of metaphysics' in Shakespeare is at all exactly equivalent to the Thomism etc. in Dante. There is an indefinite overlapping of course. What is important in both is something which is a fusion of thought and feeling, and which is never quite translateable into abstract language" (*L5* 203-04).

4. The Cyrenaic sect, founded by Aristippus (ca. 430–350 BC) maintained a doctrine of radical hedonism, according to which bodily pleasure was the supreme good.

5. François de Malherbe (1555-1628), French poet whose prose criticism insisted on rational discipline in the use of language and verse form. Ferdinand Brunot's thesis *La Doctrine de Malherbe* (1891) was taken up by twentieth-century proponents of French "classicism."

6. In 1918, TSE remarked of George Eliot: "she thought her business was philosophic tragedy" (*L1* 259) and praised Henry James "for his mastery over, his baffling escape from, Ideas" (1.650). The "phrase" TSE alludes to is taken from the title of Henry James's story *The Figure in the Carpet* (1896).

7. In *Epistola* X (numbered XIII in some editions) (1314-17 or 1319-20), addressed to his patron Cangrande della Scala, Dante explains that the *Commedia* works on several levels: literal, allegorical, moral, and anagogical.

8. In Homer's *Odyssey*, the Cimmerians live in a city of perpetual darkness.

9. TSE learned from his *TLS* review of Frank L. Schoell's *Études sur l'humanisme continental en Angleterre à la fin de la Renaissance* (1926) that in his plays Chapman "took much of his Senecal philosophy from the *Adages* of Erasmus and from versions of Epictetus and Plutarch by Italian scholars and translators" (3.32).

10. In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (1927), TSE stated: "in a period like the Elizabethan, the Senecan attitude of Pride, the Montaigne attitude of Scepticism, and the Machiavelli attitude of Cynicism, arrived at a kind of fusion in the Elizabethan individualism" (3.249). The English translation of Innocent Gentillet's *Contre-Machiavel* [*Anti-Machiavel*] (1576) was largely responsible for the villainous depictions of Machiavelli on the Elizabethan stage.

11. Arnold discusses "the method and the secret of Jesus" in chapter 12 of *Literature and Dogma* (1873).

12. In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," TSE contends that "the difference between Shakespeare and Dante is that Dante had one coherent system of thought behind him . . . Dante's poetry receives a boost . . . from the fact that the thought behind it is the thought of a man as great and lovely as Dante himself: St. Thomas. The thought behind Shakespeare is of men far inferior to Shakespeare himself . . . It does not make Dante a greater poet" (3.252-53).

13. In his introduction to Samuel Johnson's *London: A Poem and The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1930) written at this time, TSE comments: "a good many second-rate writers tried to

write something like [Pope], unaware of the fact that the change of sensibility demanded a change of idiom" (4.168).

14. Ancient Naimisharanya (combining the Sanskrit for "Light of the Divine Eye" [*Naimish*] and forest [*Aranya*]) philosophers contemplated truth in the dense forests of India.

15. TSE frequently referred to the canto depicting the lovers Paolo and Francesca (*Inferno* V) as a touchstone of poetic greatness throughout his career; see for example "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (2.109-10) and "Dante" (3.706).

16. TSE earlier ridiculed John Middleton Murry for propounding a "messianic Shakespeare, bringing a new philosophy and a new system of yoga" (3.245). On 30 Nov 1929, when recommending *The Wheel of Fire* to Gerard Hopkins at Oxford UP, TSE remarked, "I believe that Murry does not like this man's Shakespeare work" (*L4* 684).

17. TSE remarked in "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca": "I would suggest that none of the plays of Shakespeare has a 'meaning,' although it would be equally false to say that a play by Shakespeare is meaningless" (3.252). In this essay, TSE began a long-running debate with I. A. Richards, co-author of *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), on the interpretation of poetry.

18. F. H. Bradley, *Appearance and Reality* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1908), xiv.

19. TSE alludes to Hamlet's rebuke to Rosencrantz and Guildenstern: "you would pluck out the heart of my mystery" (*Hamlet* III.ii.356-57).

20. In 1928, TSE read the manuscript of Knight's essay "Thaisa," later reworked as *Myth and Miracle*. Here Knight outlined his thesis that Shakespeare's final plays were the "inevitable development of the questioning, the pain, the profundity and grandeur of the plays they succeed" (London: E. J. Burrow & Co, 1929), 1.

21. In *The Influence of Beaumont and Fletcher on Shakespeare* (1901), Ashley Thorndike argued that Shakespeare had fallen under the influence of the popular romances of Beaumont and Fletcher.

22. Knight's work was received by contemporary critics as a reaction against the "character-analysis" epitomized by A. C. Bradley's influential *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904).

23. TSE takes this approach in "Hamlet" (1919) by focusing on Shakespeare's apparent inability to adapt successfully Thomas Kyd's earlier version of the play.

24. Knight states that "interpretation is passive, and looks back, regarding only the imperative challenge of a poetic vision" (2).

25. In "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," TSE argues that "champions of Shakespeare as a great philosopher, have a great deal to say about Shakespeare's power of thought, but they fail to show that he thought to any purpose; that he had any coherent view of life, or that he recommended any procedure to follow" (3.252).

26. On 20 Aug 1934, in response to an inquiry about this sentence, TSE informed Rufus William Lowen of the University of Notre Dame that he was "unable to remember" the precise meaning. TSE translated Charles Mauron's "On Reading Einstein" in the *Criterion* for Oct 1930. Max Planck (1858-1947), German physicist regarded as a founder of quantum physics, for which he received the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1918. In "Dante" (1929), TSE quoted the lines of Piccarda Donati in *Paradiso* III.85, "la sua volontade è nostra pace" ["his will is our peace" (*DC3* 31)], saying that they affected him as "*literally true*" (3.729).

27. Knight praised Colin Still's *Shakespeare's Mystery Play* (1921) as a "remarkable book" (17). TSE wrote to Still (1888-1973) on 6 May 1930 to arrange a meeting and to borrow a copy of his

book (it was then out of print, but would be augmented and republished as *The Timeless Theme* in 1936). Although critics have claimed that *The Waste Land* is indebted to Still's analysis of archetypal symbols in *The Tempest*, which he connects to ancient mystery rituals, TSE made it clear to Still in a letter of 6 May 1930 that he had "overlooked" *Shakespeare's Mystery Play* "when it was published" in the autumn of 1921 (*L5* 165).

Baudelaire[1]

I

Anything like a just appreciation of Baudelaire has been slow to arrive in England, and still is defective or partial even in France. There are, I think, special reasons for the difficulty in estimating his worth and finding his place. For one thing, Baudelaire was in some ways far in advance of the point of view of his own time, and yet was very much of it, very largely partook of its limited merits, faults, and fashions. For another thing, he had a great part in forming a generation of poets after him; and in England he had what is in a way the misfortune to be first and extravagantly advertised by Swinburne, and taken up by the followers of Swinburne.[2] He was universal, and at the same time confined by a fashion which he himself did most to create. To dissociate the permanent from the temporary, to distinguish the man from his influence, and finally to detach him from the associations of those English poets who first admired him, is no small task. His comprehensiveness itself makes difficulty, for it tempts the partisan critic, even now, to adopt Baudelaire as the patron of his own beliefs.

It is the purpose of this essay to affirm the importance of Baudelaire's prose works, a purpose justified by this translation of one of those works which is indispensable for any student of his poetry. This is to see Baudelaire as something more than the author of the *Fleurs du Mal* and consequently to revise somewhat our estimate of that book. Baudelaire came into vogue at a time when "Art for Art's sake" was a dogma.[3†] The care which he took over his poems and the fact that, contrary to the fluency of his time, both in France and England he restricted himself to this one volume, encouraged the opinion that Baudelaire was an artist exclusively for art's sake. The doctrine does not, of course, really apply to anybody; no one applied it less than Pater, who spent many years, not so much in illustrating it, as in expounding it as a *theory of life*, which is not the same thing at all.[4] But it was a doctrine which did affect criticism and appreciation, and which did obstruct a proper judgment of Baudelaire. He is in fact a greater man than was imagined, though perhaps not such a perfect poet.

Baudelaire has, I believe, been called a fragmentary Dante, for what that description is worth.[5] It is true that many people who enjoy Dante enjoy

Baudelaire; but the differences are as important as the similarities. Baudelaire's inferno is very different in quality and significance from that of Dante. Truer, I think, would be the description of Baudelaire as a later and more limited Goethe. As we begin to see him now, he represents his own age in somewhat[6†] the same way in which Goethe represents an earlier age. As a critic of the present generation, Mr. Peter Quennell has recently said in his book, *Baudelaire and the Symbolists*:[7]

> He had enjoyed a *sense of his own age*, had recognised its pattern while the pattern was yet incomplete, and – because it is only our misapprehension of the present which prevents our looking into the immediate future, our ignorance of to-day and of its real as apart from its spurious tendencies and requirements – had anticipated many problems, both on the æsthetic and on the moral plane, in which the fate of modern poetry is still concerned. [64]

Now the man who has this sense of his age is hard[8†] to analyse. He is exposed to its follies as well as sensitive to its inventions; and in Baudelaire, as well as in Goethe, is some of the out-moded nonsense of his time. The parallel between the German poet who has always been the symbol of perfect "health" in every sense, as well as of universal curiosity, and the French poet who has been the symbol of morbidity in mind and concentrated interests in work, may seem paradoxical. But after this lapse of time the difference between "health" and "morbidity" in the two men becomes more negligible; there is something artificial and even priggish about Goethe's healthiness, as there is about Baudelaire's unhealthiness; we have passed beyond both fashions, of health or malady, and they are both merely men with restless, critical, curious minds and the "sense of the age"; both men who understood and foresaw a great deal. Goethe, it is true, was interested in many subjects which Baudelaire left alone; but by Baudelaire's time it was no longer necessary for a man to embrace such varied interests in order to have the sense of the age; and in retrospect some of Goethe's studies seem to us (not altogether justly) to have been merely dilettante hobbies. The most of Baudelaire's prose writings (with the exception of the translations from Poe, which are of less interest to an English reader)[9] are as important as the most of Goethe. They throw light on the *Fleurs du Mal* certainly, but they also expand immensely our appreciation of their author.

It was once the mode to take Baudelaire's Satanism seriously, as it is now the tendency to present Baudelaire as a serious and Catholic Christian.[10]

Especially as a prelude to the *Journaux Intimes* this diversity of opinion needs some discussion. I think that the latter view – that Baudelaire is essentially Christian – is nearer the truth than the former, but it needs considerable reservation. When Baudelaire's Satanism is dissociated from its less creditable paraphernalia, it amounts to a dim intuition of a part, but a very important part, of Christianity. Satanism itself, so far as not merely an affectation, was an attempt to get into Christianity by the back door. Genuine blasphemy, genuine in spirit and not purely verbal, is the product of partial belief, and is as impossible to the complete atheist as to the perfect Christian.[11] It is a way of affirming belief. This state of partial belief is manifest throughout the *Journaux Intimes*. What is significant about Baudelaire is his theological innocence. He is discovering Christianity for himself; he is not assuming it as a fashion or weighing social or political reasons, or any other accidents. He is beginning, in a way, at the beginning; and being a discoverer, is not altogether certain what he is exploring and to what it leads; he might almost be said to be making again, as one man, the effort of scores[12†] of generations. His Christianity is rudimentary or embryonic; at best, he has the excesses of a Tertullian (and even Tertullian is not considered wholly orthodox and well balanced). His business was not to practise Christianity, but – what was much more important for his time – to assert its *necessity*.

Baudelaire's morbidity of temperament cannot, of course, be ignored: and no one who has looked at the work of Crépet or the recent small biographical study of François Porché can forget it.[13] We should be misguided if we treated[14†] it as an unfortunate ailment which can be discounted or attempted to[15†] detach the sound from the unsound in his work. Without the morbidity none of his work would be possible or significant; his weaknesses can be composed into a larger whole of strength, and this is implied in my assertion that neither the health of Goethe nor the malady of Baudelaire matters in itself: it is what both men made of their endowments that matters. To the eye of the world, and quite properly for all questions of private life, Baudelaire was thoroughly perverse and insufferable: a man with a talent for ingratitude and unsociability, intolerably irritable, and with a mulish determination to make the worst of everything; if he had money, to squander it; if he had friends, to alienate them; if he had any good fortune, to disdain it. He had the pride of the man who feels in himself great weakness and great strength. Having great genius, he had neither the patience nor the inclination, had he had the power, to overcome his weakness; on the contrary, he exploited it for theoretical purposes. The morality of such a course may be a matter for endless dispute[16†]; for Baudelaire, it was the way to liberate his mind and give us the legacy and lesson that he has left.

He was one of those who have great strength, but strength merely to *suffer*. He could not escape suffering and could not transcend it, so he *attracted* pain to himself. But what he could do, with that immense passive strength and sensibilities which no pain could impair, was to study his suffering. And in this limitation he is wholly unlike Dante, not even like any character in Dante's Hell. But, on the other hand, such suffering as Baudelaire's implies the possibility of a positive state of beatitude. Indeed, in his way of suffering is already a kind of presence of the supernatural and of the superhuman. He rejects always the purely natural and the purely human; in other words, he is neither "naturalist" nor "humanist." Either because he cannot adjust himself to the actual world he has to reject it in favour of Heaven and Hell, or because he has the perception of Heaven and Hell he rejects the present world: both ways of putting it are tenable. There is in his statements a good deal of romantic detritus; *ses ailes de géant l'empêchent de marcher*, he says of the Poet and of the Albatross, but not convincingly; but there is also truth about himself and about the world.[17] His *ennui* may of course be explained, as everything can be explained in psychological or pathological terms; but it is also, from the opposite point of view, a true form of *acedia*, arising from the unsuccessful struggle towards the spiritual life.[18]

II

From the poems alone, I venture to think, we are not likely to grasp what seems to me the true sense and significance of Baudelaire's mind. Their excellence of form, their perfection of phrasing, and their superficial coherence, may give them the appearance of presenting a definite and final state of mind. In reality, they seem to me to have the external but not the internal form of classic art. One might even hazard the conjecture that the care for perfection of form, among some of the romantic poets of the nineteenth century, was an effort to support, or to conceal from view, an inner disorder. Now the true claim of Baudelaire as an artist is not that he found a superficial form, but that he was searching for a form of life. In minor form he never indeed equaled Théophile Gautier, to whom he significantly dedicated his poems: in the best of the slight verse of Gautier there is a satisfaction, a balance of inwards and form, which we do not find in Baudelaire.[19] He had a greater technical ability than Gautier, and yet the content of feeling is constantly bursting the receptacle. His apparatus, by which I do not mean his command of words and rhythms, but his stock of imagery (and every poet's stock of imagery is circumscribed somewhere), is not wholly perdurable or adequate. His prostitutes, mulattoes, Jewesses, serpents, cats, corpses form a machinery which has not worn very well; his Poet, or his Don Juan, has a romantic ancestry which is too clearly traceable.[20] Compare with the costumery of Baudelaire the stock of imagery of the *Vita Nuova*,[21] or of Cavalcanti, and you find Baudelaire's does not everywhere wear as well as that of several centuries earlier; compare him with Dante or Shakespeare, for what such a comparison is worth, and he is found not only a much smaller poet, but one in whose work much more that is perishable has entered.

To say this is only to say that Baudelaire belongs to a definite place in time. Inevitably the offspring of romanticism, and by his nature the first counter-romantic in poetry, he could, like anyone else, only work with the materials which were there. It must not be forgotten that a poet in a romantic age cannot be a "classical" poet except in tendency. If he is sincere, he must express with individual differences the general state of mind – not as a *duty*, but simply because he cannot help participating in it. For such poets, we may expect often to get much help from reading their prose works and even notes and diaries; help in deciphering the discrepancies between head and heart, means and end, material and ideals.

What preserves Baudelaire's poetry from the fate of most French poetry of the nineteenth century up to his time, and has made him, as M. Valéry has said in a recent introduction to the *Fleurs du Mal*, the one modern French poet to be widely read abroad, is not quite easy to conclude.[22] It is partly that technical mastery which can hardly be overpraised, and which has made his verse an inexhaustible study for later poets, not only in his own language. When we read

> Maint joyau dort enseveli
> Dans les ténèbres et l'oubli,
> Bien loin des pioches et des sondes;
>
> Mainte fleur épanche à regret
> Son parfum doux comme un secret
> Dans les solitudes profondes,[23]

we might for a moment think it a more lucid bit of Mallarmé; and so original is the arrangement of words that we might easily overlook its borrowing from Gray's *Elegy*.[24] When we read

> Valse mélancolique et langoureux vertige![25]

we are already in the Paris of Laforgue. Baudelaire gave to French poets as generously as he borrowed from English and American poets.[26†] The renovation of the versification of Racine has been mentioned often enough; quite genuine, but might be overemphasized, as it sometimes comes near to being a trick.[27] But even without this, Baudelaire's variety and resourcefulness would still be immense.

Furthermore, besides the stock of images which he used that seems already second-hand, he gave new possibilities to poetry in a new stock of imagery of contemporary life.

> . . . Au cœur d'un vieux faubourg, labyrinthe fangeux
> Où l'humanité grouille en ferments orageux,
>
> On voit un vieux chiffonnier qui vient, hochant la tête,
> Butant, et se cognant aux murs comme un poète.[28]

This introduces something new, and something universal in modern life. (The last line quoted, which in ironic terseness anticipates Corbière, might be contrasted with the whole poem "Bénédiction" which begins the volume.[29]) It is not merely in the use of imagery of common life, not merely in the use of imagery of the sordid life of a great metropolis, but in the elevation of such imagery to the *first intensity* – presenting it as it is, and yet making it represent something much more than itself – that Baudelaire has created a mode of release and expression for other men.[30]

This invention of language, at a moment when French poetry in particular was famishing for such invention, is enough to make of Baudelaire a great poet, a great landmark in poetry. Baudelaire is indeed the greatest exemplar in *modern* poetry in any language, for his verse and language is the nearest thing to a complete renovation that we have experienced. But his renovation of an attitude towards life is no less radical and no less important. In his verse, he is now less a model to be imitated or a source to be drained than a reminder of the duty, the consecrated task, of sincerity. From a fundamental sincerity he could not deviate. The superficies of sincerity (as I think has not always been remarked) is not always there. As

I have suggested, many of his poems are insufficiently removed from their romantic origins, from Byronic paternity and Satanic fraternity. The "Satanism" of the Black Mass was very much in the air; in exhibiting it Baudelaire is the voice of his time; but I would observe that in Baudelaire, as in no one else, it is redeemed by *meaning something else*. He uses the same paraphernalia, but cannot limit its symbolism even to all that of which he is conscious. Compare him with Huysmans in *À rebours*, *En route*, and *Là-bas*.[31] Huysmans, who is a first-rate realist novelist of his time, only succeeds in making his diabolism interesting when he treats it externally, when he is merely describing a manifestation of his period (if such it was). His own interest in such matters is, like his interest in Christianity, a petty affair. Huysmans merely provides a document. Baudelaire would not even provide that, if he had been really absorbed in that ridiculous hocus-pocus. But actually Baudelaire is concerned, not with demons, black masses, and romantic blasphemy but with the real problem of good and evil. It is hardly more than an accident of time that he uses the current imagery and vocabulary of blasphemy. In the middle nineteenth century, the age which (at its best) Goethe had prefigured, an age of bustle, programmes, platforms, scientific progress, humanitarianism and revolutions[32†] which improved nothing, an age of progressive degradation, Baudelaire perceived that what really matters is Sin and Redemption. It is a proof of his honesty that he went as far as he could honestly go and no further. To a mind observant of the post-Voltaire France (*Voltaire . . . le prédicateur des concierges*),[33] a mind which saw the world of *Napoléon le petit* more lucidly than did that of Victor Hugo,[34] a mind which at the same time had no affinity for the *Saint-Sulpicerie* of the day,[35] the recognition of the reality of Sin is a New Life; and the possibility of damnation is so immense a relief in a world of electoral reform, plebiscites, sex reform and dress reform, that damnation itself is an immediate form of salvation – of salvation from the ennui of modern life, because it at last gives some significance to living. It is this, I believe, that Baudelaire is trying to express; and it is this which separates him from the modernist Protestantism of Byron and Shelley.[36] It is apparently Sin in the Swinburnian sense, but really Sin in the permanent Christian sense, that occupies the mind of Baudelaire.

Yet, as I said, the sense of Evil implies the sense of good. Here too, as Baudelaire apparently confuses, and perhaps did confuse, Evil with its theatrical representations, Baudelaire is not always certain in his notion of the Good. The romantic idea of Love is never quite exorcized, but never quite surrendered to. In "Le Balcon," which M. Valéry considers, and I think rightly, one of Baudelaire's most beautiful poems, there is all the romantic idea, but something more: the reaching out towards something which cannot be had *in*, but which may be had partly *through*, personal relations.[37] Indeed, in much romantic poetry the sadness is due to the exploitation of the fact that no human relations are adequate to human desires, but also to the disbelief in any further object for human desires than that which fails to satisfy them. One of the unhappy necessities of human existence is that we have to "find things out for ourselves." If it were not so, the statement of Dante would, at least for poets, have done once for all. Baudelaire has all the romantic sorrow, but invents a new kind of romantic nostalgia – a derivative of his nostalgia being the *poésie des départs*, the *poésie des salles d'attente*.[38] In a beautiful paragraph of the volume in question, *Mon coeur mis à nu*, he imagines the vessels lying in harbour as saying: *Quand partons-nous vers le bonheur?*[39] and his minor successor Laforgue exclaims: *Comme ils sont beaux, les trains manqués*.[40] The poetry of flight – which, in contemporary France, owes a great debt to the poems of the A. O. Barnabooth of Valéry Larbaud – is, in its origin in this paragraph of Baudelaire, a dim recognition of the direction of beatitude.[41]

But in the adjustment of the natural to the spiritual, of the bestial to the human and the human to the supernatural, Baudelaire is a bungler compared with Dante; the best that can be said, and that is a very great deal, is that what he knew he found out for himself. In this book, the *Journaux Intimes*, and especially in *Mon cœur mis à nu*, he has a great deal to say of the love of man and woman. One aphorism which has been especially noticed is the following: *la volupté unique et suprême de l'amour gît dans la certitude de faire le mal*.[42] This means, I think, that Baudelaire has perceived that what distinguishes the relations of man and woman from the copulation of beasts is the knowledge of Good and Evil (of *moral* Good and Evil which are not natural Good and Bad or Puritan Right and Wrong). Having an imperfect, vague romantic conception of Good, he was at least able to understand that[43†] the sexual act as evil is more dignified, less boring, than to think of it as the natural, "life-giving," cheery automatism of the modern world. For Baudelaire, sexual operation is at least something not analogous to Kruschen Salts.[44]

So far as we are human, what we do must be either evil or good;[45*] so far as we do evil or good, we are human; and it is better, in a paradoxical way, to do evil than to do nothing: at least, we exist. It is true to say that the glory of man is his capacity for salvation; it is equally true to say that his glory is his capacity for damnation. The worst that can be said of most of our malefactors, from statesmen to thieves, is that they are not men enough to be damned. Baudelaire was man enough for damnation: whether he *is* damned is, of course, another question, and we are not prevented from praying for his repose. In all his humiliating traffic with other beings, he walked secure in this high vocation, that he was capable of a damnation denied to the politicians and the newspaper editors of Paris.

III

Baudelaire's notion of beatitude certainly tended to the wishy-washy; and even in one of the most beautiful of his poems, "L'invitation au voyage," he hardly exceeds the *poésie des départs*. And because his vision is here so restricted, there is for him a gap between human love and divine love. His human love is definite and positive, his divine love vague and uncertain: hence his insistence upon the evil of love, hence his constant vituperations of the female. In this there is no need to pry for psychopathological causes, which would be irrelevant at best;[46] for his attitude towards women is consistent with the point of view which he had reached. Had he been a woman he would, no doubt, have held the same views about men. He has arrived at the perception that a woman must be to some extent a symbol; he did not arrive at the point of harmonizing his experience with his ideal needs. The complement, and the correction to the *Journaux Intimes*, so far as they deal with the relations of man and woman, is the *Vita Nuova*, and the *Divine Comedy*. But – I cannot assert it too strongly – Baudelaire's view of life, such as it is, is objectively apprehensible, that is to say, his idiosyncrasies can partly explain his view of life, but they cannot explain it away. And this view of life is one which has grandeur and which exhibits heroism; it was an evangel to his time and to ours. *La vraie civilisation*, he wrote, *n'est pas dans le gaz, ni dans la vapeur, ni dans les tables tournantes. Elle est dans la diminution des traces du péché originel.*[47] It is not quite clear exactly what *diminution* here implies, but the tendency of his thought is clear, and the message is still accepted by but few. More than half a century later T. E. Hulme left behind him a paragraph which Baudelaire would have approved:

> In the light of these absolute values, man himself is judged to be essentially limited and imperfect. He is endowed with Original Sin. While he can occasionally accomplish acts which partake of perfection, he can never himself *be* perfect. Certain secondary results in regard to ordinary

> human action in society follow from this. A man is essentially bad, he can only accomplish anything of value by discipline – ethical and political. Order is thus not merely negative, but creative and liberating. Institutions are necessary.[48†]

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally "Introduction" to *Charles Baudelaire: Intimate Journals*, trans. Christopher Isherwood (London: Blackamore Press, 1930). Pp. 126; Introduction, 7-26.

TSE was invited to write this introduction by J. E. Pouterman in July 1929. On 28 Nov, TSE wrote to Pouterman to say his introduction was ready (*L4* 682); in early Dec it was posted together with a transcript of Isherwood's translation marked with a number of suggestions for revision. TSE returned the corrected proof on 10 Feb 1930 (*L5* 91). He agreed to write an introduction for the Blackamore limited edition, which was published in Sept, on condition that he could reprint it in *SE*.

In Nov 1930, W. H. Auden wrote to TSE offering to review Isherwood's translation in the *Criterion*. It did not appear, but Auden wrote an introduction that replaced TSE's in the 1949 Methuen edition. Isherwood explained: "Mr. T. S. Eliot wrote an admirable introduction to the original edition. We have decided not to ask permission to reprint this, however, since it is already available in his *Selected Essays*" (*Intimate Journals*, London: Methuen, 1949), 14.

2. Swinburne's review of the revised and enlarged second edition of *Les Fleurs du mal* (1861) in the *Spectator* (6 Sept 1862) and his elegy for Baudelaire, "Ave atque Vale" (1868), made a strong impression upon the English "decadent" poets, including Arthur Symons.

3†. In *Intimate Journals* (hereafter *IJ*): "an influential dogma"

4. Walter Pater advocated the supreme value of beauty and the love of art for its own sake in his conclusion to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (1873).

5. TSE refers to Jules Barbey d'Aurevilly's 1857 defense of *Les Fleurs du mal* in which, elaborating on Thierry's comparison of Baudelaire with Dante, he remarked: "Il y a du Dante dans l'auteur des *Fleurs du Mal*, mais c'est du Dante d'une époque déchue" [There is something of Dante in the author of *Flowers of Evil*, but it is a Dante of a fallen age] (Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, ed. Claude Pichois, vol 1, Paris: Gallimard, 1975, 1195).

6†. In *IJ*: "something"

7. TSE reviewed Peter Quennell's *Baudelaire and the Symbolists* (1929) in the *Criterion* for Jan 1930 (4.11).

8†. In *IJ*: "apt to be very hard"

9. From 1847 until 1865, Baudelaire translated Poe's works; these were published as *Histoires extraordinaires* (1852), *Nouvelles histoires extraordinaires* (1857), *Aventures d'Arthur Gordon Pym* (1858), *Eureka* (1864) and *Histoires grotesques et sérieuses* (1865). Two essays on Poe are to be found in his *Œuvres complètes*.

10. In *Baudelaire: A Study* (1920), Symons depicted Baudelaire as a Satanist. TSE admired Charles du Bos's essay in *Approximations* (1922), which explored Baudelaire's profound sense of sin and his need for prayer.

11. The first version of the prose dedication to *Les Fleurs du mal*, which Gautier persuaded Baudelaire not to print, declared: “le blasphémateur confirme la Religion” [the blasphemer confirms religion] (Baudelaire, *Œuvres complètes*, vol 1, 1975, 187).

12†. In *IJ*: “hundreds”

13. Eugène Crépet (1827-92) edited Baudelaire’s *Œuvres posthumes et correspondances inédites* [Posthumous Works and Unpublished Letters] (1887) and François Porché (1877-1944) was the author of a biography, *La Vie Douloureuse de Charles Baudelaire* [*The Painful Life of Charles Baudelaire*] (1926), which received an unsigned short notice, possibly by TSE, in the *Criterion* for Sept 1927 (283). TSE owned a copy of the 1928 English translation of Porché’s study by John Mavin.

14†. In *IJ*: “It would be quite misguided to treat”

15†. In *IJ*: “to attempt to”

16†. In *IJ*: “disputation”

17. *Trans*: “his giant wings impede him as he walks.” “L’Albatros” [“The Albatross”] (1859). *Baudelaire: The Complete Verse*, vol 1, trans. Francis Scarfe (London: Anvil Press, 1986), 59. Subsequent translations of Baudelaire are by Scarfe.

18. *ennui*: mental listlessness, boredom, malaise. Baudelaire calls *acedia* (spiritual apathy, torpor) the “maladie des moines” [“malady of Monks”] in *Intimate Journals*, XIV, 39.

19. Baudelaire’s dedication to *Les Fleurs du mal* (1861) reads: “Au poète impeccable au parfait magicien ès lettres françaises, à mon très cher et très vénéré maître et ami Théophile Gautier, avec les sentiments de la plus profonde humilité, je dédie ces fleurs maladives. C. B.” *Trans*: “To the impeccable poet and perfect magician of French literature, my most dear and venerable master and friend Théophile Gautier, with feelings of the most profound humility, I dedicate these flowers of sickness. C.B.,” *Baudelaire*, vol 1, 51.

20. Lord Byron’s *Don Juan* appeared between 1819 and 1824, Baudelaire’s “Don Juan aux enfers” [“Don Juan in Hell”] in 1846.

21. In “Dante” (1929), TSE states that the “dream-imagery” of the *Vita nuova* “was following something more essential than merely a ‘literary’ tradition” (3.732).

22. Valéry, “Introduction” to *Les Fleurs du mal* (1926).

23. *Trans*: “Many a gem sleeps buried in darkness and oblivion, far beyond the reach of spade or sounding-rod; many a flower squanders its perfume with regret, its scent sweet as a secret, in the depths of solitude.” “Le Guignon” [“Bad luck”] (1844).

24. “Full many a gem of purest ray serene, / The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear; / Full many a flower is born to blush unseen, / And waste its sweetness on the desert air.” Thomas Gray, “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1751).

25. *Trans*: “in a melancholy waltz, a slow sensual gyre.” “Harmonie du soir” [“Evening Harmony”] (1857).

26†. The following sentence is deleted from *IJ*: “And gives still to poets in foreign tongues as well.”

27. TSE discusses Baudelaire’s “resemblances to Racine” in “Baudelaire in our Time” (1927) (3.74).

28. *Trans*: “In the heart of some old suburb, a slimy labyrinth where mankind seethes in a stormy fermentation, you will see a rag-and-bone-man heave in sight, wagging his head from side to side, stumbling along and banging himself against the walls like any poet.” “Le vin des chiffoniers” [“The Rag-and-Bone-Men’s wine”] (1854).

29. In "Bénédiction" the poet is presented as misunderstood by his contemporaries, including the poet's own mother who regrets his birth.

30. In "What Dante Means to Me" (1950), TSE recalls: "I think that from Baudelaire I learned first, a precedent for the poetical possibilities, never developed by any poet writing in my own language, of the more sordid aspects of the modern metropolis, of the possibility of fusion between the sordidly realistic and phantasmagoric."

31. Huysmans's novels *À rebours* (1884), *En route* (1895), and *Là-Bas* (1891) exemplify the emergent "decadence" of the age.

32†. In *IJ*: "sanguine revolutions"

33. *Trans*: "Voltaire . . . the preacher to concierges"; part of Baudelaire's attack on Voltaire as "*the Anti-Poet*, the king of loungers, the prince of triflers." *Intimate Journals*, LI, 73.

34. *Napoléon le Petit* (1852) was a political pamphlet by Victor Hugo attacking the reign of Napoleon III, who had declared himself French Emperor in 1851 after a coup d'état.

35. Saint-Sulpice is a Roman Catholic church in the Luxembourg Quarter of Paris. Priests who joined the Society of Saint-Sulpice were noted for their learning, for their spirituality, and for attracting sons of the nobility. Huysmans set the action of *Là-Bas* (1891), his novel dealing with Satanism, in Saint-Sulpice.

36. Byron was educated in Scottish Calvinism. Shelley was expelled from Oxford University for refusing to disavow authorship of a pamphlet titled *The Necessity of Atheism* (1811) and signed a hotel register on 23 July 1816 in Greek as "a lover of mankind, democrat and atheist," quoted in Gavin de Beer, "An 'Atheist' in the Alps," *Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin*, 9 (1958), 1.

37. In "Le Balcon," the poet recollects intense moments shared with his mistress on quiet nights by the fireside, or on the balcony.

38. *Trans*: the poetry of departures, the poetry of waiting rooms.

39. *Trans*: "My Heart Laid Bare," *Journaux intimes*, XXII (59). This section of the *Journaux intimes* begins with entry XXII and continues to CXVII (59-106). *Read*: "Quand partons-nous pour le bonheur?" ["How soon shall we set sail towards happiness?"]; in fact, this quotation is taken from the "Fusées" ["Squibs and Crackers"] section of *Journaux intimes*, XI (36).

40. *Read*: "Oh, qu'ils sont pittoresques les trains manqués." [Oh, how picturesque the missed trains]. Laforgue, "Derniers Vers, X," *Œuvres complètes*, vol 2 (Paris: Mercure de France, 1920), 120.

41. TSE owned a copy of Larbaud's *Les Poésies de A. O. Barnabooth* (1923).

42. *Trans*: "the Sole and Supreme pleasure of Love lies in the absolute knowledge of doing *Evil*." *Intimate Journals*, III, 32.

43†. In *IJ*: "see that to conceive of"

44. Kruschen Salts: a popular patent medicine advertised in the *Graphic* of 1 Feb 1919 as "Entirely British for 160 Years," and as a laxative and tonic that restores good health: "Vague aches and pains steadily disappear; gout, rheumatism, sciatica, lumbago and associated inflammation yield surely to the body-cleansing properties of Kruschen Salts" (153).

45*. TSE's note (not in *IJ*; added in *SE*, 1932): "Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?" – Romans 6:16.

46. Dr. René Laforgue's *Devant la barrière de la névrose* [Before the Barrier of Neurosis] (1930) offers a psychoanalytical study of Baudelaire's "neurosis," a study which characterized his life as a psychological and moral defeat (*échec*).

47. *Trans*: "the true civilization . . . has nothing to do with gas [lighting] or steam [power] or table-turning [spiritualism]. It consists in the diminution of the traces of original sin." *Intimate Journals*, LXXXI, 84-85.

48†. *Speculations*, ed. Herbert Read (London: Routledge, 1924), 47.

† In *IJ*, the "Introduction" concluded with the following paragraph: "To translate successfully an imperfect series of notes and jottings like the *Journaux Intimes* is a more difficult task than the whole of Baudelaire's formal prose. There are repetitions (of thoughts which are probably all the more important to the author because of being repeated); there are short phrases and single words which seem to be memoranda for thoughts, unknown to us, to be developed later; and there are many references to Baudelaire's familiars and to personages of the day. There is the opportunity for vast annotation by some French student who can devote much time to the subject. Pending the appearance of a definitive text of this book in one or other of the two large French editions which are in process of publication, it would be absurd to make such an attempt in an English translation. The reader need not, however, be deterred. The most important passages are also the most comprehensible. We need not stop to guess at meanings in cryptogram, or to enquire the identity of all the persons mentioned. There is enough to be done in pondering the passages which are fully expressed. And the more we study it, the more coherence appears, the more sane and severe and clear-sighted we find a view of life which is, I believe, much more modern for us than are most philosophies between Baudelaire's time and our own."

Introductory Essay to *London: A Poem and The Vanity of Human Wishes by Samuel Johnson*[1]

There is an essay to be written on the quotations which Sir Walter Scott used for the chapter headings of his novels, to illustrate the wide reading and critical good taste of that novelist. It is a great many years ago – about thirty years ago – that I was struck by a quotation of four lines; I cannot now remember at what chapter of which of Scott's novels it is placed:

> His fall was destin'd to a barren strand,
> A petty fortress, and a dubious hand;
> He left the name, at which the world grew pale,
> To point a moral, or adorn a tale.[2]

It was not for a good many years after, that I read *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, but the impression which the whole poem made upon me was only a confirmation of the impression which the four lines had made upon me long before. These lines, especially the first two, with their just inevitable sequence of *barren*, *petty*, and *dubious*, still seem to me among the finest that have ever been written in that particular idiom.[3]

It is as dangerous to generalize about the poetry of the eighteenth century as about that of any other age; for it was, like any other age, an age of transition. We are accustomed to make a rough tripartite division between the poetry of the age of Pope, the poetry of sentimental philosophizing – Thomson, Young, Cowper – and the early Romantic movement. What really happened is that after Pope there was no one who thought and felt nearly enough like Pope to be able to use his language quite successfully; but a good many second-rate writers tried to write something like it, unaware of the fact that the change of sensibility demanded a change of idiom. Sensibility alters from generation to generation in everybody, whether we will or no; but expression is only altered by a man of genius. A great many second-rate poets, in fact, are second rate just for this reason, that they have not the sensitiveness and consciousness to perceive that they feel differently from the preceding generation, and therefore must use words differently. In the eighteenth century there are a good many second-rate poets: and mostly they are second rate because they were incompetent to find a style of writing for themselves, suited to the matter they wanted to talk about and the way in which they apprehended this matter.

In such a period the poets who are still worth reading may be of two kinds: those who, however imperfectly, attempted innovations in idiom, and those who were just conservative enough in sensibility to be able to devise an interesting variation on the old idiom. The originality of Gray and Collins consists in their adaptation of an Augustan style to an eighteenth-century sensibility.[4] The originality of Goldsmith consists in his having the old and the new in such just proportion that there is no conflict; he is Augustan and also sentimental and rural without discordance. Of all the eighteenth-century poets, Johnson is the nearest to a die-hard. And of all the eighteenth-century poets, Goldsmith and Johnson deserve fame because they used the form of Pope beautifully, without ever being mere imitators. And from the point of view of the artisan of verse, their kind of originality is as remarkable as any other: indeed, to be original with the *minimum* of alteration, is sometimes more distinguished than to be original with the *maximum* of alteration.

Certain qualities are to be expected of any type of good verse at any time; we may say the qualities which good verse shares with good prose.[5] Hardly any good poet in English has written *bad* prose; and some English poets have been among the greatest of English prose writers. The finest prose writer of Shakespeare's time was, I think, Shakespeare himself; Milton and Dryden were among the greatest prose writers of their times.[6] Wordsworth and Coleridge may be cited, and Keats; and Shelley – not I think in his correspondence, but certainly in his "Defence of Poetry."[7] This is not a sign of versatility but of unity. For there are qualities essential to good prose which are essential to good verse as well; and we may say positively with Mr. Ezra Pound, that verse must be at least as well written as prose.[8] We may even say that the originality of some poets has consisted in their finding a way of saying in verse what no one else had been able to say except in prose written or spoken. Such is the originality of Donne, who, though employing an elaborate metric and an uncommon vocabulary, yet manages to maintain a tone of direct informal address. The talent of Dryden is exactly the same: the difference is only that the speech which he uses is that of a more formal age. Donne makes poetry out of a learned but colloquial dialogue speech, Dryden out of the prose of political oratory; and Pope out of the most polished drawing-room manner. And of Goldsmith and

Johnson we can say the same; their verse is poetry partly because it has the virtues of good prose.

Those who condemn or ignore *en bloc* the poetry of the eighteenth century on the ground that it is "prosaic" are stumbling over an uncertainty of meaning of the word "prosaic" to arrive at exactly the wrong conclusion.[9] One does not need to examine a great deal of the inferior verse of the eighteenth century to realize that the trouble with it is that it is not prosaic enough. We are inclined to use "prosaic" as meaning not only "like prose," but as "lacking poetic beauty" – and the Oxford and every other dictionary give us warrant for such use.[10] Only, we ought to distinguish between poetry which is like *good* prose, and poetry which is like *bad* prose. And even so, I believe more prose is bad because it is like bad poetry, than poetry is bad because it is like bad prose. And to have the virtues of good prose is the first and minimum requirement of good poetry.

If you look at the bad verse of any age, you will find most of it lacking in the virtues of prose. When there is a period of good verse, it has often been preceded by a period in which verse was bad because it was too poetic, too artificial; and it is very commonly followed by such another period. The development of blank verse in the hands of Shakespeare and some of his contemporaries was the work of adapting a medium which to begin with was almost intractably poetic, so that it could carry the burdens and exhibit the subtleties of prose; and they accomplished this before prose itself was highly developed.[11] The work of Donne, in a lesser form, was the same. It has prose virtues, and the heavy toil of his minor imitators was wholly to degrade the idiom of Donne into a lifeless verse convention. Speech meanwhile was changing, and Dryden appeared to cleanse the language of verse and once more bring it back to the prose order. For this reason he is a great poet.

The idiom of the Augustan age could not last, for the age itself could not last. But so positive was the culture of that age, that for many years the ablest writers were still naturally in sympathy with it; and it crushed a number of smaller men who felt differently but did not dare to face the fact, and who poured their new wine – always thin, but sometimes of good flavour – into the old bottles. Yet the influence of Dryden and Pope over the middle of the eighteenth century is by no means so great, or so noxious, as has been supposed. A good part of the dreariest verse of the time is written under the shadow of Milton.

Far in the watery waste, where his broad wave
From world to world the vast Atlantic rolls,
On from the piny shores of Labrador
To frozen Thule east, her airy height
Aloft to heaven remotest Kilda lifts.

Mallet: *Amyntor and Theodora*.[12]

Thus far of beauty and the pleasing forms
Which man's untutored fancy, from the scenes
Imperfect of this ever changing world
Creates; and views, enamoured.

Akenside: *Pleasures of the Imagination*.[13]

But besides this Miltonic stuff, which is respectable only because Cowper, Thomson, and Young made this line the vehicle for reflection and for observation of nature which prepared the way for Wordsworth; and besides the innumerable Odes, of which none but Gray's and Collins's are remembered, there was a considerable output of five foot couplets of which one can only say that this form of verse is hardly more unsuitable for what the man had to say than any other would have been. Of such is the *Botanic Garden* and its competitors.

Who that beholds the summer's glistening swarms,
Ten thousand thousand gaily gilded forms,
In violent dance of mixed rotation play,
Bask in the beam, and beautify the day. . . .

Brooke: *Universal Beauty*.[14]

This is decadence. The eighteenth century in English verse is not, after Pope, Swift, Prior, and Gay, an age of courtly verse. It seems more like an age of retired country clergymen and schoolmasters. It is cursed with a Pastoral convention – Collins's Eclogues are bad enough, and those of Shenstone consummately dull – and a ruminative mind.[15] And it is intolerably poetic. Instead of working out the proper form for its matter, when it has any, and informing verse with prose virtues, it merely applies the magniloquence of Milton or the neatness of Pope to matter which is wholly unprepared for it; so that what the writers have to say always appears surprised at the way in which they choose to say it.

In this rural, pastoral, meditative age Johnson is the most alien figure. Goldsmith is more a poet of his time, with his melting sentiment just saved by the precision of his language. But Johnson remains a townsman, if certainly not a courtier; a student of mankind not of natural history; a great prose writer; with no tolerance of swains and milkmaids.[16] He has more in common in spirit with Crabbe than with any of his contemporaries; at the same time he is the last Augustan. He is in no way an imitator of Dryden or Pope; very close to them in idiom, he gives his verse a wholly personal stamp.

The two Satires which follow are Johnson's only exercises in this genre. *London* appeared in 1738; *The Vanity of Human Wishes* in 1749. To my mind the latter is the finer poem; but both of them seem to me to be among the greatest verse Satires of the English or any other language; and so far as comparison is justifiable, I do not think that Juvenal, his model, is any better. They are *purer* satire than anything of Dryden or Pope, nearer in spirit to the Latin. For the satirist is in theory a stern moralist castigating the vices of his time or place; and Johnson has a better claim to this seriousness than either Pope or Dryden. In the hands of Dryden the satire becomes almost the lampoon; and Dryden had a special gift for farce. Pope also is more personal than the true satirist. In one way, Johnson goes back to an earlier tradition; however inferior as satires Marston's or even Hall's may be to Johnson's, they are surely much nearer to the spirit and intention of Juvenal than are those of Dryden or Pope.[17] Dryden is, in the modern sense, humorous and witty; Pope is in the modern sense witty though not humorous; Johnson, neither humorous nor witty in this sense, has yet "the proper wit of poetry" as the seventeenth century and the Augustan age had it also.[18] I can better expose this by a few quotations than by a definition.

There mark what ills the scholar's life assail,
Toil, envy, want, the patron, and the jail.

Condemned a needy supplicant to wait,
While ladies interpose, and slaves debate.

Fate never wounds more deep the generous heart,
Than when a blockhead's insult points the dart.

Some fiery fop, with new commission vain,
Who sleeps on brambles till he kills his man;
Some frolick drunkard, reeling from a feast,
Provokes a broil, and stabs you for a jest.[19]

The precision of such verse gives, I think, an immense satisfaction to the reader: he has said what he wanted to say, with that urbanity which contemporary verse would do well to study; and the satisfaction I get from such lines is what I call the *minimal* quality of poetry. There is much greater poetry than Johnson's; but after all, how little, how very little, good poetry there is anyway. And the kind of satisfaction these lines give me is something that I must have, at least, from any poetry in order to like it. It is the certainty, the ease with which he hits the bull's-eye every time, that makes Johnson a poet. The blundering assaults of his contemporary Churchill – a man of by no means poor abilities – do not make poetry; Churchill gives us an occasional right line, but never a right poem.[20]

And the verse of Johnson has the good qualities of his own best prose, and of the best prose of his time. Bolingbroke, for instance, at his best, has some of the same merit.

Those who demand of poetry a day dream, or a metamorphosis of their own feeble desires and lusts, or what they believe to be "intensity" of passion, will not find much in Johnson. He is like Pope and Dryden, Crabbe and Landor, a poet for those who want poetry and not something else, some stay for their own vanity. I sometimes think that our own time, with its elaborate equipment of science and psychological analysis, is even less fitted than the Victorian age to appreciate poetry as poetry. But if lines 189-220 of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* are not poetry, I do not know what is.[21]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. *London: A Poem and The Vanity of Human Wishes by Samuel Johnson, LL.D. with an Introductory Essay by T. S. Eliot* (London: Frederick Etchells & Hugh Macdonald [Haslewood Books], 1930). Pp. 44; Introductory Essay, 9-17. TSE earlier reviewed *The Phoenix Nest* (1926) in the Haslewood series and then wrote "A Dialogue on Poetic Drama" for their edition of *Of Dramatic Poesie: An Essay by John Dryden* (1928). In a letter of 29 May 1928, TSE mentioned to Macdonald that he looked forward "to doing Saml. Johnson for you" (*L4* 172). Not until 10 Jan 1930, however, did he formally agree to write an introduction for the Haslewood edition of Johnson's satires: "I think about 4000 words will be my length. I don't want to review the whole of satire from Juvenal: but I ought to try to define the characteristic merits of the late Augustan poetry of England, and fix the place of Johnson among the innumerable small but competent coupleteers of his time" (*L5* 32). On 22 Apr. TSE sent the essay to Macdonald (*L5* 154), who published it in the autumn.

2. *The Vanity of Human Wishes* (1749), ll. 217-20. TSE quotes from the Muses' Library edition, *The Poems of Johnson, Goldsmith, Gray and Collins*, ed. T. Methuen Ward (London:

Routledge, 1905), 67, borrowed from the London Library. These lines are quoted at the end of Scott's historical romance *Ivanhoe* (1819), which TSE read as a child.

3. In "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), TSE slightly misquotes these lines, commenting that "the effect is due to a contrast of ideas, different in degree but the same in principle, as that which Johnson mildly reprehended [in metaphysical poetry]" (2.377).

4. In "Andrew Marvell" (1921), TSE observes that: "Gray and Collins were masters, but they had lost that hold on human values, that firm grasp of human experience, which is a formidable achievement of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets" (2.313) and in "The Minor Metaphysicals" (1930) that: "It took me a good many years, not only of reading but of experience of life, to enjoy and appreciate the poetry of Dryden, the poetry of Samuel Johnson, of Gray and Collins and the eighteenth century generally" (4.116).

5. For TSE's reflections on the qualities of good verse and good prose, see "Prose and Verse" (1921) (2.324).

6. TSE examines Dryden's prose at length in "John Dryden – III. Dryden the Critic, Defender of Sanity" (4.286). In a letter to Dorothy Pound of 5 July 1947, TSE remarks: "If it's Milton's prose that you are talking about, Samuel Johnson said all that needed to be said about its barbarousness, yet it does not lack for admirers still."

7. TSE devotes two lectures to the prose criticism of "Wordsworth and Coleridge" and "Shelley and Keats" in his 1932-33 Charles Eliot Norton lectures (4.625, 641).

8. In a Jan 1915 letter to Harriet Monroe, editor of *Poetry* magazine, Pound advertises Ford Madox Ford's dictum: "Poetry must be *as well written as prose*." *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber, 1951), 48.

9. Matthew Arnold's influential general introduction to *The English Poets*, ed. T. H. Ward (1880), criticized eighteenth-century poetry as prosaic.

10. prosaic (OED): "Of language or writing: having the character, style, or diction of prose as opposed to poetry; plainly or simply worded; lacking in poetic expression, feeling, or imagination."

11. In "Christopher Marlowe" (1919), TSE asserts: "I believe, that blank verse within Shakespeare's lifetime was more highly developed, that it became the vehicle of more varied and more intense feelings than it has ever conveyed since" (2.97).

12. *Amyntor and Theodora; or, The Hermit* (London: Paul Vaillant, 1747), ll. 1-5. TSE modernizes the spelling of the text. The Scottish poet David Mallet (1701-65), author of the philosophical poem *The Excursion* (1728), was a member of Pope's literary circle. On 10 Feb 1939, TSE complained to E. W. F. Tomlin of a contemporary poetry manuscript in which the "versification seems to me of a mediocrity which is excelled by half a dozen writers of the eighteenth century, the most conspicuous of whom might be Mallet."

13. *Pleasures of the Imagination* (1772), Book II ll. 1-4 (*The Poetical Works of Mark Akenside*, London: George Bell, 1884, 106). The poetry of Mark Akenside (1721-70) anticipates some of the themes of Romantic literature. TSE was familiar with Johnson's critique of Mallet and his praise of Akenside's blank verse in *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1781), of which TSE remarks in a lecture "Johnson as Critic and Poet" (1944): "we must read it as a whole if we are to appreciate the magnitude of Johnson's achievement" (*OPP* 163).

14. *Universal Beauty. A Poem. Part V* (London: J. Wilcox, 1735), ll. 166-69, by Irish writer and dramatist Henry Brooke (1703-81). TSE modernizes the spelling of the text. *Universal Beauty* is thought to have influenced Erasmus Darwin's *The Botanic Garden* (1789-91).

15. eclogue (OED): "a pastoral dialogue, such as Virgil's Bucolics." TSE's 1905 Muses' Library edition contained Collins's "Oriental Eclogues" (1759). In a letter to Macdonald of 29 Apr 1929, TSE mooted the idea of a Haslewood volume in lieu of a new edition of Johnson: "I mean that if you would like to consider doing any other 17th or 18th [century] poet *instead*, I would be ready to consider it too. I don't know whether Shenstone is worth it" (*L4* 486).

16. In his "Life of Shenstone," Johnson asserts: "the four parts of his 'Pastoral Ballad' demand particular notice. I cannot but regret that it is pastoral: an intelligent reader, acquainted with the scenes of real life, sickens at the mention of the *crook*, the *pipe*, the *sheep*, and the *kids*" (*Lives* 465).

17. *London* (1738) is an adaptation of Juvenal's *Satire 3* and "The Vanity of Human Wishes" of *Satire 10*.

18. Dryden's essay on "The Proper Wit of Poetry" prefixed *Annus Mirabilis: The Year of Wonders, 1666* (1667) and was collected in TSE's Everyman edition of Dryden's *Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (1912).

19. *The Vanity of Human Wishes*, ll. 157-58, 21-12; *London*, ll. 168-69, 226-29 (Muses' edition, 66, 67, 58, 60).

20. TSE refers to Churchill's satire of Johnson as "Pomposo" in *The Ghost* (1762), to which he made reference in his 1926 review of A. G. Barnes's edition of *A Book of English Satire* (2.791).

21. TSE refers to the verse paragraph on the downfall of Charles XII of Sweden. In "Johnson as Critic and Poet," TSE observes of this passage: "These thirty-two lines compose a paragraph which is, in itself, quite perfect in form" (*OPP* 180). On 27 Oct 1930 TSE wrote to R. W. Chapman to acknowledge receipt of his Clarendon edition of *Johnson: Prose and Poetry* (1922), remarking: "Incidentally I find that in your edition of *The Vanity of Human Wishes* the lines I quote are numbered 191 ff. instead of 189 ff., and I must look up the Muses Library edition to which I was referring to find out how the discrepancy arises." In fact, lines 103 and 104 were erroneously omitted when Johnson revised the poem for the 1755 Dodsley edition (evidently, the basis for 1905 Muses' Library and 1930 Haslewood Books editions).

Arnold and Pater[1]

Although Pater is as appropriate to the 'seventies as to the 'eighties, because of the appearance of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* in 1873, I have chosen to discuss him in this volume[2]* because of the date 1885, the middle of the decade, which marks the publication of *Marius the Epicurean*.[3] The first may certainly be counted the more "influential" book; but *Marius* illustrates another, but related aspect of Pater's work. His writing of course extended well into the 'nineties; but I doubt whether anyone would consider the later books and essays of anything like the importance, in social history or in literary history, of the two I have mentioned.

The purpose of the present paper is to indicate a direction from Arnold, through Pater, to the 'nineties, with, of course, the solitary figure of Newman in the background.

It is necessary first of all to estimate the aesthetic and religious views of Arnold: in each of which, to borrow his own phrase against him, there is an element of *literature* and an element of *dogma*.[4] As Mr. J. M. Robertson has well pointed out in his *Modern Humanists Reconsidered*, Arnold had little gift for consistency or for definition.[5] Nor had he the power of connected reasoning at any length: his flights are either short flights or circular flights. Nothing in his prose work, therefore, will stand very close analysis, and we may well feel that the positive content of many words is very small. That Culture and Conduct are the first things, we are told; but what Culture and Conduct are, I feel that I know less well on every reading. Yet Arnold does still hold us, at least with *Culture and Anarchy* and *Friendship's Garland*.[6] To my generation, I am sure, he was a more sympathetic prose writer than Carlyle or Ruskin;[7] yet he holds his position and achieves his effects exactly on the same plane, by the power of his rhetoric and by representing a point of view which is particular though it cannot be wholly defined.

But the revival of interest in Arnold in our time – and I believe he was more admired and read not only than Carlyle and Ruskin, but than Pater – is a very different thing from the influence he exerted in his own time. We go to him for refreshment and for the companionship of a kindred point of view to our own, but not as disciples. And therefore it is the two books I have mentioned that are most readable. Even the *Essays in Criticism* cannot be read very often; *Literature and Dogma*, *God and the Bible*, and *Last Essays on Church and Religion*, have served their turn and can hardly be read through.[8] In these books he attempts something which must be austerely impersonal; in them reasoning power matters, and it fails him; furthermore, we have now our modern solvers of the same problem Arnold there set himself, and they, or some of them, are more accomplished and ingenious in this sort of rationalizing than Arnold was. Accordingly, and this is my first point, his Culture survives better than his Conduct, because it can better survive vagueness of definition. But both Culture and Conduct were important for his own time.

Culture[9†] has three aspects, according as we look at it in *Culture and Anarchy*, in *Essays in Criticism*, or in the abstract. It is in the first of these two books that Culture shows to best advantage. And the reason is clear:[10†] Culture there stands out against a background to which it is contrasted, a background of definite[11†] items of ignorance, vulgarity and prejudice. As an invective against the crudities of the industrialism of his time, the book is perfect of its kind. Compared with Carlyle, it looks like clear thinking, and is certainly clearer expression; and compared with Arnold, Ruskin often appears long-winded and peevish.[12] Arnold taught English expository and critical prose a restraint and urbanity it needed. And hardly, in this book, do we question the meaning of Culture; for the good reason that we do not need to. Even when we read that Culture "is *a study of perfection*,"[13] we do not at that point raise an eyebrow to admire how much Culture appears to have arrogated from Religion. For we have shortly before been hearing something about "the will of God," or of a joint firm called "reason and the will of God";[14] and soon after we are presented with Mr. Bright and Mr. Frederic Harrison as foils to Culture; and appearing in this way between the will of God and Mr. Bright, Culture is here sufficiently outlined to be recognizable.[15] *Culture and Anarchy* is on the same side as *Past and Present* or *Unto this Last*.[16] Its ideas are really no clearer – one reason why Arnold, Carlyle and Ruskin were so influential, for precision and completeness of thought do not always make for influence. (Arnold, it is true, gave something else: he produced a kind of illusion of precision and clarity; that is, maintained these qualities as ideals of style.)

Certainly, the prophets of the period just before that of which I am supposed to be writing excelled in denunciation (each in his own way) rather than in construction; and each in his own fashion lays himself open to the charge of tedious querulousness. And an idea, such as that of Culture, is apt to lead to consequences which its author cannot foresee and probably will not like. Already, in the *Essays*, Culture begins to seem a little more priggish – I do not say "begins" in a chronological sense – and a little more anaemic. Where Sir Charles Adderley and Mr. Roebuck appear, there is more life than in the more literary criticism.[17] Arnold is in the end, I believe, at his best in satire and in apologetics for literature, in his defence and enunciation of a needed attitude.

To us, as I have said, Arnold is rather a friend than a leader.[18†] He was a champion of "ideas" most of whose ideas we no longer take seriously. His Culture is powerless to raid or to harm. But he is at least a forerunner of what is now called Humanism, of which I must here say something, if only to contrast it and compare it with the Aestheticism of Pater. How far Arnold is responsible for the birth of Humanism would be difficult to say; we can at least say that it issues very naturally from his doctrine, that Charles Eliot Norton is largely responsible for its American form, and that therefore Arnold is another likely ancestor. But the resemblances are too patent to be ignored. The difference is that Arnold could father something apparently quite different – the view of life of Walter Pater. The resemblance is that literature, or Culture, tended with Arnold to usurp the place of Religion. From one point of view, Arnold's theory of Art and his theory of Religion are quite harmonious, and Humanism is merely the more coherent structure. Arnold's prose writings fall into two parts; those on Culture and those on Religion; and the books about Christianity seem only to say again and again – merely that the Christian faith is of course impossible to the man of culture. They are tediously negative. But they are negative in a peculiar fashion: their aim is to affirm that the emotions of Christianity can and must be preserved without the belief. From this proposition two different types of man can extract two different types of conclusion: (1) that Religion is Morals, (2) that Religion is Art. The effect of Arnold's religious campaign is to divorce Religion from thought.

In Arnold himself there was a powerful element of Puritan morality, as in most of his contemporaries, however diverse. And the strength of his moral feeling – we might add its blindness also – prevented him from seeing how very odd might look the fragments[19†] of the fabric which he knocked about so recklessly. "The power of Christianity has been in the immense emotion which it has excited," he says;[20] not realizing at all that this is a counsel to get all the emotional kick out of Christianity one can, without the bother of believing it; without reading the future to foresee

Marius the Epicurean, and finally *De Profundis*.[21] Furthermore, in his books dealing with Christianity he seems bent upon illustrating in himself the provincialisms which he rebuked in others. "M. de Laveleye," he says in the preface to *God and the Bible*, with as deferential a manner as if he were citing M. Renan himself, "is struck, as any judicious Catholic may well be struck, with the superior freedom, order, stability, and even religious earnestness, of the Protestant nations as compared with the Catholic." He goes on complacently, "their religion has made them what they are."[22] I am not here concerned with the genuine differences between Catholic and Protestant; only with the tone which Arnold adopts in this preface and throughout this book; and which is in no wise more liberal than that of Sir Charles Adderley or Mr. Roebuck or "Mr. Tennyson's great broad-shouldered Englishman."[23] He girds at (apparently) Herbert Spencer for substituting *Unknowable* for *God*; quite unaware that his own Eternal not ourselves comes to exactly the same thing as the Unknowable.[24] And when we read Arnold's discourses on Religion, we return to scrutinize his Culture with some suspicion.

For Arnold's Culture, at first sight so enlightened, moderate and reasonable, walks so decorously in the company of the will of God, that we may overlook the fact that it tends to develop its own stringent rules and restrictions.

> Certainly, culture will never make us think it an essential of religion whether we have in our Church discipline "a popular authority of elders," as Hooker calls it, or whether we have Episcopal jurisdiction.[25]

Certainly, "culture" in itself can never make us think so, any more than it can make us think that the quantum theory is an essential of physical science: but such people as are interested in this question at all, however cultured they be, hold one or the other opinion pretty strongly; and Arnold is really affirming that to Culture all theological and ecclesiastical differences are indifferent. But this is a rather positive dogma for Culture to hold. When we take *Culture and Anarchy* in one hand, and *Literature and Dogma* in the other, our minds are gradually darkened by the suspicion that Arnold's objection to Dissenters is partly that they do hold strongly to that which they believe, and partly that they are not Masters of Arts of Oxford. Arnold, as Masters of Arts,[26†] should have had some scruple about the use of words.[27] But in the very preface to the second edition of *Literature and Dogma* he says:

> The *Guardian* proclaims "the miracle of the incarnation" to be the "fundamental truth" for Christians. How strange that on me should devolve the office of instructing the *Guardian* that the fundamental thing for Christians is not the Incarnation but the imitation of Christ![28]

While wondering whether Arnold's own "imitation" is even a good piece of mimicry, we notice that he employs *truth* and *thing* as interchangeable: and a very slight knowledge of the field in which he was skirmishing should have told him that a "fundamental truth" in theology and a "fundamental thing" in his own loose jargon have nothing comparable about them. The total effect of Arnold's philosophy is to set up Culture in the place of Religion, and to leave Religion to be laid waste by the anarchy of feeling. And Culture is a term which each man not only may interpret as he pleases, but must indeed interpret as he can. So the gospel of Pater follows naturally upon the prophecy of Arnold.

Even before the 'seventies began Pater seems to have written, though not published, the words:

> The theory, or idea, or system, which requires of us the sacrifice of any part of this experience, in consideration of some interest into which we cannot enter, or some abstract morality we have not identified with ourselves, or what is only conventional, has no real claim upon us.[29]*

Although more outspoken in repudiating any measure than man for all things,[30]† Pater is not really uttering anything more subversive than the following words of Arnold:

> Culture, disinterestedly seeking in its aim at perfection to see things as they really are, shows us how worthy and divine a thing is the religious side in man, though it is not the whole of man. But while recognising the grandeur of the religious side in man, culture yet makes us eschew an inadequate conception of man's totality.[31]

Religion, accordingly, is merely a "'side' in (*sic*) man;" a side which so to speak must be kept in its place. But when we go to Arnold to enquire what is "man's totality," that we may ourselves aim at so attractive a consummation, we learn nothing; any more than we learn about the "secret" of Jesus of which he has so much to say.[32]

The degradation of philosophy and religion, skilfully initiated by Arnold, is competently continued by Pater. "The service of philosophy, and of religion and culture as well, to the human spirit," he says in the 1873 conclusion to *The Renaissance*, "is to startle it into a sharp and eager observation" [210]. "We shall hardly have time," he says, "to make theories about the things we see and touch." Yet we have to be "curiously testing new opinions" [211]; so it must be – if opinions have anything to do with theories, and unless wholly capricious and unreasoning they must have – that the opinions we test can only be those provided for our enjoyment by an inferior sort of drudges who are incapable of enjoying our own free life, because all their time is spent (and "*we* hardly have time") in making theories. And this again is only a development of the intellectual Epicureanism of Arnold.

Had Pater not had one gift denied to Arnold, his permutation of Arnold's view of life would have little interest. He had a taste for painting and the plastic arts, and particularly for Italian painting, a subject to which Ruskin had introduced the nation.[33] He had a visual imagination; he had also come into contact with another generation of French writers than that which Arnold knew; the zealous Puritanism of Arnold was in him considerably mitigated, but the zeal for culture was equally virulent. So his peculiar appropriation of religion into culture was from another side: that of emotion, and indeed of sensation; but in making this appropriation, he was only doing what Arnold had given licence to do.

Marius the Epicurean marks indeed one of the phases of the fluctuating relations between religion and culture in England since the Reformation; and for this reason the year 1885 is an important one. Newman, in leaving the Anglican Church, had turned his back upon Oxford.[34] Ruskin, with a genuine sensibility for certain types of art and architecture, succeeded in satisfying his nature by translating everything immediately into terms of morals. The vague religious vapourings of Carlyle, and the sharper, more literate social fury of Ruskin yield before the persuasive sweetness of Arnold.[35†] Pater is a new variation.

We[36†] are liable to confusion if we call this new variation the "aesthete." Pater was, like the other writers I have just mentioned (except Newman), a moralist. If, as the *Oxford Dictionary* tells us, an aesthete is a "professed appreciator of the beautiful,"[37] then there are at least two varieties: those whose profession is most vocal, and those whose appreciation is most professional. If we wish to understand painting, we do not go to Oscar Wilde for help. We have specialists, such as Mr. Berenson, or Mr. Roger Fry. Even in that part of his work which can only be called literary criticism, Pater is always primarily the moralist. In his essay on Wordsworth he says:

> To treat life in the spirit of art, is to make life a thing in which means and ends are identified: to encourage such treatment, the true moral significance of art and poetry.[38]

That was his notion: to find the "true moral significance of art and poetry." Certainly, a writer may be none the less classified as a moralist, if his moralizing[39†] is suspect or perverse. We have to-day a witness in the person of M. André Gide.[40] As always in his imaginary portraits, so frequently in his choice of other writers as the subjects of critical studies, Pater is inclined to emphasize whatever is morbid or associated with physical malady. His admirable study of Coleridge is charged with this attraction.

> More than Childe Harold (he says of Coleridge), more than Werther, more than René himself, Coleridge, by what he did, what he was, and what he failed to do, represents that inexhaustible discontent, languor, and home-sickness, that endless regret, the chords of which ring all through our modern literature.[41]

Thus again in Pascal he emphasizes the malady, with its consequences upon the thought; but we feel that somehow what is important about Pascal has been missed.[42] But it is not that he treats philosophers "in the spirit of art," exactly; for when we read him on Leonardo or Giorgione, we feel that there is the same preoccupation, coming between him and the object as it really is. He is, in his own fashion, moralizing upon Leonardo or Giorgione, on Greek art or on modern poetry. His famous dictum: "Of this wisdom, the poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake has most; for art comes to you professing frankly to give nothing but the highest quality to your moments as they pass, and simply for those moments' sake," is itself a theory of ethics; it is concerned not with art but with life.[43] The second half of the sentence is of course demonstrably untrue, or else being true of everything else besides art is meaningless; but it is a serious statement of morals. And the disapproval which greeted this first version of the Conclusion to *The Renaissance* is implicitly a just recognition of that fact.[44] "Art for art's sake" is the offspring of Arnold's Culture; and we can hardly venture to say that it is even a perversion of Arnold's doctrine, considering how very vague and ambiguous that doctrine is.

When religion is in a flourishing state, when the whole mind of society is moderately healthy and in order, there is an easy and natural association between religion and art. Only when religion has been partly retired and confined, when an Arnold can sternly remind us that Culture is wider than Religion, do we get “religious art” and in due course “aesthetic religion.” Pater undoubtedly had from childhood a religious bent, naturally to all that was liturgical and ceremonious. Certainly this is a real and important part of religion; and Pater cannot thereby be accused of insincerity and “aestheticism.” His attitude must be considered both in relation to his own mental powers and to his moment of time. There were other men like him, but without his gift of style, and such men were among his friends. In the pages of Thomas Wright, Pater, more than most of his devout friends, appears a little absurd.[45] His High Churchmanship is undoubtedly very different from that of Newman, Pusey and the Tractarians, who, passionate about dogmatic essentials, were singularly indifferent to the sensuous expressions of orthodoxy.[46] It was also dissimilar to that of the priest working in a slum parish. He was “naturally Christian”[47] – but within very narrow limitations: the rest of him was just the cultivated Oxford don and disciple of Arnold, for whom religion was a matter of feeling, and metaphysics not much more. Being incapable of sustained reasoning, he could not take philosophy or theology seriously; just as, being primarily a moralist, he was incapable of seeing any work of art simply as it is.

Marius the Epicurean represents the point of English history at which the repudiation of revealed religion by men of culture and intellectual leadership coincides with a renewed interest in the visual arts. It is Pater’s most arduous attempt at a work of literature; for *Plato and Platonism* can be almost dissolved into a series of essays.[48] *Marius* itself is incoherent; its method is a number of fresh starts; its content is a hodge-podge of the learning of the classical don, the impressions of the sensitive holiday visitor to Italy, and a prolonged flirtation with the liturgy. Even A. C. Benson, who makes as much of the book as anyone can, observes in a passage of excellent criticism:

> But the weakness of the case is, that instead of emphasising the power of sympathy, the Christian conception of Love, which differentiates Christianity from all other religious systems, Marius is after all converted, or brought near to the threshold of the faith, more by its sensuous appeal, its liturgical solemnities; the element, that is to say, which Christianity has in common with all religions, and which is essentially human in character. And more than that, even the very peace which Marius discerns in Christianity is the old philosophical peace over again.[49]

This is sound criticism. But – a point with which Dr. Benson was not there concerned – it is surely a merit, on the part of Pater, and one which deserves recognition, to have clarified the issues. Matthew Arnold's religion is the more confused, because he conceals, under the smoke of strong and irrational moral prejudice, just the same, or no better, Stoicism and Cyrenaicism of the amateur classical scholar.[50] Arnold Hellenizes and Hebraicizes in turns; it is something to Pater's credit to have Hellenized purely.[51]

Of the essence of the Christian faith, as Dr. Benson frankly admits, Pater knew almost nothing.[52] One might say also that his intellect was not powerful enough to grasp – I mean, to grasp as firmly as many classical scholars whose names will never be so renowned as that of Pater – the essence of Platonism or Aristotelianism, or Neo-Platonism. He therefore, or his Marius, moves quite unconcerned with the intellectual activity which was then amalgamating Greek metaphysics with the tradition of Christ; just as he is equally unconcerned with the realities of Roman life as we catch a glimpse of them in Petronius, or even in such a book as Dill's on the reign of Marcus Aurelius.[53] Marius merely *drifts* towards the Christian Church, if he can be said to have any motion at all; nor does he or his author seem to have any realization of the chasm to be leapt between the meditations of Aurelius and the Gospel. To the end, Marius remains only a half-awakened soul. Even at his death, in the midst of the ceremonies of which he is given the benefit, his author reflects "Often had he fancied of old that not to die on a dark or rainy day might itself have a little alleviating grace or favour about it,"[54] recalling to our minds the "springing of violets from the grave" in the Conclusion to *The Renaissance* [208], and the death of Flavian.[55]

I have spoken of the book as of some importance. I do not mean that its importance is due to any influence it may have exerted. I do not believe that Pater, in this book, has influenced a single first-rate mind of a later generation. His view of art, as expressed in *The Renaissance*, impressed itself upon a number of writers in the 'nineties, and propagated some confusion between life and art which is not wholly irresponsible for some untidy lives. The theory (if it can be called a theory) of "art for art's sake" is still valid in so far as it can be taken as an exhortation to the artist to stick to his job; it never was and never can be valid for the spectator, reader or auditor. How far *Marius the Epicurean* may have assisted a few "conversions" in the following decade I do not know: I only feel sure that with the direct current of religious development it has had nothing to do at all. So far as that current – or one important current – is concerned, Marius is much nearer to being merely due to Pater's contact – a contact no more intimate than that of Marius himself – with something which was happening and would have happened without him.

The true importance of the book, I think, is as a document of one moment in the history of thought and sensibility in the nineteenth century. The dissolution of thought in that age, the isolation of art, philosophy, religion, ethics and literature, is interrupted by various chimerical attempts to effect imperfect syntheses. Religion became morals, religion became art, religion became science or philosophy; various blundering attempts were made at alliances between various branches of thought. Each half-prophet believed that he had the whole truth. The alliances were as detrimental all round as the separations. The right practice of "art for art's sake" was the devotion of Flaubert or Henry James; Pater is not with these men, but rather with Carlyle and Ruskin and Arnold, if some distance below them. *Marius* is significant chiefly as a reminder that the religion of Carlyle or that of Ruskin or that of Arnold or that of Tennyson or that of Browning, is not enough. It represents, and Pater represents more positively than Coleridge of whom he wrote the words, "that inexhaustible discontent, languor, and home-sickness . . . the chords of which ring all through our modern literature."[56]

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally published in the *Bookman* (New York), 72 (Sept 1930) 1-7 and as "The Place of Pater" in *The Eighteen-Eighties: Essays by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature*, ed. Walter de la Mare (Cambridge UP, 1930). Pp. xxviii + 271; 93-106.

On 20 Nov 1929, TSE accepted an invitation from Walter de la Mare to contribute an essay to a volume on the 1880s written by Fellows of the Royal Society of Literature, claiming: "I am not an authority on Aesthetics, or on Walter Pater, and I am remarkably ignorant of the work of Vernon Lee. I mean, I could write about Pater, but there seems no obvious reason why I should be the man chosen for that task; and I have no all round knowledge of the aesthetic of the period" (*L4* 682). TSE wrote again on 19 Dec to tell de la Mare that "'Aesthetics' is quite beyond me, and if I tackled Pater, I should feel on very uncertain ground about his art criticism" (*L4* 724). However, on 26 Dec, TSE agreed to write on "the relation of Pater to Arnold, with a retrospect at Newman," explaining: "The mutations of the religious sensibility, in that descent, are interesting, and not, I think, without a bearing on literary criticism. *Literature and Dogma* is the *mittelpunkt* of course: my view being that Arnold in surrendering dogma, gave a deplorable bias to literature" (*L4* 729). TSE apologized to de la Mare on 27 Mar 1930 for not having finished the essay on time, but he posted it on 21 Apr saying: "I fear that it is too short, also that everything I have said has been said before; and am thoroughly dissatisfied with it" (*L5* 154). On 1 June, TSE told Charles du Bos (from whom he had long been trying to secure an essay on Pater for the *Criterion*) that he had recently written "a superficial essay on *Marius* [*the Epicurean*] in relation to *Literature and Dogma*" (*L5* 208). TSE placed the essay in the Sept issue of the New York *Bookman* through the literary agent David Higham. The Royal Society of Literature collection was published in Dec.

2*. TSE's note: "A volume entitled *The Eighteen-Eighties*. Edited by Walter de la Mare for the Royal Society of Literature. Cambridge."

3. TSE first read *Marius the Epicurean* (1885) as a student at Milton Academy in 1906.

4. Arnold, *Literature & Dogma: An Essay towards a Better Apprehension of the Bible* (1873).

5. J. M. Robertson, *Modern Humanists Reconsidered* (1927). Robertson was restating a criticism of Arnold first made by Frederic Harrison in "Culture: A Dialogue," *Fortnightly Review*, Mar 1867.

6. *Culture and Anarchy: An Essay in Political and Social Criticism* (1869) and *Friendship's Garland: Being the Conversations, Letters, and Opinions of the Late Arminius, Baron von Thunder-Ten-Tronckh* (1871) were collections of periodical essays originally published in the *Cornhill Magazine* (July 1867-Aug 1868) and the *Pall Mall Gazette* (July 1866-Nov 1870), respectively.

7. In "Contemporary English Prose" (1923), TSE characterised the prose styles of Newman and Ruskin, and compared Carlyle's prose style to that of Pater (2.448).

8. *Essays in Criticism* (First Series 1865; Second Series 1888); *God and the Bible: A Review of Objections to "Literature and Dogma"* (1875); *Last Essays on Church and Religion* (1877).

9†. In "The Place of Pater": "But Culture"

10†. In "The Place of Pater": "perfectly clear"

11†. In "The Place of Pater": "perfectly definite"

12. In his "Syllabus for a Tutorial Class in Modern English Literature" (1917), TSE characterized Pater's "enthusiasm for art at the opposite pole from Ruskin's, though both react against industrialism" (1.590).

13. *Culture and Anarchy: The Works of Matthew Arnold*, vol 6 (London: Macmillan, 1903), 7.

14. *Culture and Anarchy*, xli-xlii.

15. In his Introduction to *Culture and Anarchy* Arnold attacks the positivist and author Frederic Harrison and the politician John Bright as dangerous radicals, claiming with characteristic irony: "although, like Mr. Bright and Mr. Frederic Harrison, and the editor of the *Daily Telegraph*, and a large body of valued friends of mine, I am a Liberal, yet I am a Liberal tempered by experience, reflection, and renouncement, and I am, above all, a believer in culture" (*Culture and Anarchy*, 3-4).

16. Carlyle's *Past and Present* (1843) and Ruskin's *Unto This Last* (1862) were both included in TSE's "Syllabus for a Tutorial Class in Modern English Literature" (1.478).

17. In "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1864), republished as the opening essay of *Essays in Criticism* (1865), Arnold quotes from the politicians Sir Charles Adderley (1814-1905) and John Roebuck (1801-79) in order to ridicule their supposed self-satisfaction.

18†. In "The Place of Pater": "or if a leader, only as a stimulus to proceed"

19†. In "The Place of Pater": "the fragments might look"

20. Arnold, *God and the Bible: The Works of Matthew Arnold*, vol 8, x.

21. In *De Profundis* [From the Depths], written while in prison in Reading Gaol and posthumously published in an abridged version in 1905, Wilde referred to Pater's "strange influence." In "A Preface to Modern Literature" (1923), TSE said that Pater "was an heir of Arnold and Ruskin, and Wilde the heir of Pater" (2.486).

22. *God and the Bible*, xxx. Arnold cites the pamphlet *Le Protestantisme et le Catholicisme* (1875) by the Belgian economist Émile de Laveleye (1822-92). TSE alludes to Renan's *Souvenirs d'enfance et de jeunesse* (included in the recommended reading for TSE's 1916 Extension lectures on modern French literature), which describes his difficulties upon leaving a Catholic seminary, observing that there were times when he was sorry he was not a Protestant, so that he might be a philosopher without ceasing to be a Catholic. Arnold had met Renan in France.

23. In chapter 3 of *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold quotes the line "A great broad-shouldered genial Englishman" from the conclusion to Tennyson's poem *The Princess* (1847). *The Works of Matthew Arnold*, vol 6, 101.

24. In the "Preface" to *God and the Bible*, Arnold observes: "To seek to discard, like some philosophers, the name of God and to substitute for it such a name as the Unknowable, will seem to a plain man, surely, ridiculous." *The Works of Matthew Arnold*, vol 8, xli. In *A System of Synthetic Philosophy* (10 vols, 1862-97) Spencer dismissed the transcendent as the "Unknowable." TSE discusses Spencer's agnosticism in "Report on the Relation of Kant's Criticism to Agnosticism" (1913) (1.40).

25. "Preface" (1869) to *Culture and Anarchy*, xxxi. Arnold quotes from Hooker's *Of the Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity* (1593): "The plot of discipline sought to erect a popular authority of elders, and to take away Episcopal jurisdiction."

26†. In "The Place of Pater" *read* "as such" for "as Masters of Arts"

27. In *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold attacked Dissenters, members of Protestant nonconformist churches and sects then powerful in English middle-class society, for their failure to interpret the Bible with sufficient attention to it as a historical and literary text.

28. "Preface" (1883) to *Literature and Dogma* (London: John Murray, 1924), xii.

29*. TSE's note: "In quoting from *The Renaissance* I use the first edition throughout." Pater's controversial Conclusion was written in 1868, first published in 1873 but withdrawn from the second edition of 1877. TSE's annotated copy of the first edition of *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1873) is held at King's; the quotation comes from pages 211-12.

30†. In "The Place of Pater": "for all things than man"

31. "Preface" (1869) to *Culture and Anarchy*, xli.

32. Arnold discusses "the method and the secret of Jesus" in chapter 12 of *Literature and Dogma*. In his Introduction to *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), written at this time, TSE warned against "the 'secret of Jesus,' a secret which having been revealed only and finally to Arnold himself, turned out to be a pretty poor secret after all" (4.146).

33. Pater's judgments on specific works of art in *Studies in the History of the Renaissance* represent an engagement with Ruskin's strictures on Italian Renaissance masters in *Modern Painters* (1846).

34. On 3 Oct 1845, Newman resigned his fellowship at Oriel College, Oxford, and on 9 Oct was received into the Roman Catholic Church.

35†. In "The Place of Pater": "who at least made a statement for a generation"

36†. In "The Place of Pater": "But we"

37. aesthete (OED): "A person who professes a special or superior appreciation of what is beautiful."

38. Pater, *Appreciations: With an Essay on Style* (London: Macmillan, 1895), 62.

39†. In "The Place of Pater": "the morality he finds"

40. On 21 Jan 1930, TSE told his cousin Marguerite Caetani: "I cannot help feeling sympathetic to anything which is anti-Gide" (*L5* 50) On TSE's recommendation, Faber had recently published Montgomery Belgion's attack on Gide in *Our Present Philosophy of Life* (1929). André Gide (1869-1951) won the Nobel Prize for literature in 1947.

41. *Appreciations*, 104; TSE's parenthesis.

42. Pater's unfinished essay on Pascal, originally planned as a lecture to be delivered at Oxford in July 1894, was posthumously collected in *Miscellaneous Studies* (1895).

43. Conclusion to *Studies in the History of the Renaissance*, 213. In "Experiment in Criticism" (1929), TSE remarked: "If you read carefully the famous epilogue to Pater's *Studies in the Renaissance* you will see that 'art for art's sake' means nothing less than art as a substitute for everything else, and as a purveyor of emotions and sensations which belong to life rather than to art" (3.755).

44. The book's Conclusion provoked a storm of criticism, especially in Oxford. In a sermon delivered at Christ Church Cathedral on 20 Apr 1875, the Bishop of Oxford attacked Pater's *carpe diem* theme as an advocacy of selfishness and idleness, warning of its potentially subversive influence upon Oxford undergraduates.

45. *The Life of Walter Pater*, 2 vols (1907), by Thomas Wright (1859-1936), boycotted by Pater's family due to its probing of biographical details, was included in TSE's "Syllabus for a Tutorial Class in Modern English Literature" (1.592).

46. The Anglican clergyman and theologian Edward Pusey (1800-82) was a leading figure in the Oxford Movement, a group of High Churchmen who published a series of controversial "Tracts for the Times" between 1833 and 1841, hence the name Tractarians.

47. The final chapter of *Marius the Epicurean* is titled "Anima Naturaliter Christiana" [a naturally Christian soul] after Tertullian's view that man's soul is naturally disposed to Christianity.

48. *Marius the Epicurean* was Pater's only novel. *Plato and Platonism* (1893) was assembled from a series of lectures Pater gave at Oxford.

49. *Walter Pater* (London: Macmillan, 1904), 111. The critic and poet A. C. Benson (1862-1925) was Master of Magdalene College, Cambridge.

50. Set in second-century Rome, *Marius the Epicurean* narrates Marius's successive encounters with Paganism, Epicureanism (the "New Cyrenaicism"), Stoicism, and finally Christianity.

51. In chapter 3 of *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold calls for a modern-day balance of the supposed qualities of the ancient Greeks and Hebrews, explaining: "The governing idea of Hellenism is *spontaneity of consciousness*; that of Hebraism, *strictness of conscience*" (124).

52. Benson comments of Pater: "The mystical union of the personality with God is outside the writer's ken" (111).

53. Petronius lived in Rome in the first century AD. Samuel Dill (1844-1924), *Roman Society from Nero to Marcus Aurelius* (1904).

54. *Marius the Epicurean: His Sensations and Ideas*, vol 2 (London: Macmillan, 1909), 224.

55. Marius's school friend Flavian dies suddenly of the plague at the end of Part One. Benson says of the passage in which Marius keeps a night vigil as Flavian dies: "his end is told with a pathetic intensity which makes it one of the strongest passages in the book" (96).

56. *Appreciations*, 104.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 10 (Oct 1930) 1-4

THE END OF A SESSION

The summer of Parliament ended in public depression and apathy, and we look towards the autumn resumption with still less hopefulness. Until recent years Parliamentary Government meant that one section of voters wanted to keep the Government in, to carry on its good work; and another section of voters wanted to turn it out, and substitute a really good one. So everyone, satisfied or not, had something to hope; and a General Election could be the occasion of excitement and festivity. But now no one wants the present government in, and no one wants it out. Mr. Snowden becomes more unpopular, and his policies more obviously ruinous; yet one shudders at the disturbance and expense of an Election which might merely instate Mr. Churchill in his place.[1] Meanwhile Parliament has been occupied chiefly with matters such as finance which very few persons, either in it or out of it, can possibly understand; and has had very little time to give to such matters as its average education and intelligence should enable it to comprehend. Such persons within that body as have strong convictions are frequently more embarrassing to their own party than to any other. In short, the distinction of M.P. is not what it once was; and we may hear at any moment from the more inflammable daily press that Parliamentary Government is an "anachronism."

It is true that the present Government has acquitted itself moderately well in Foreign Affairs.[2] That is to say, it has done very much as its predecessor did; in foreign affairs the Labour Government has not deviated from the Liberal policy of the previous Conservative Government. We doubt whether the Conservative Government would have done a jot better: though when a Conservative Government does it we call it a failure; and the same policy pursued by a Labour Government is called a success. It is the same old policy after all: that of presenting premature "self-government," such self-government to be, of course, invariably on an English model; and it involves the same old fallacies. One is that the *absolute* difference between governments is not between good and bad simply, but between being governed by people of one's own race and language and being governed by people of an alien race and language: the former is invariably better and a sovereign recipe for happiness. Another is that peoples can and must be "educated" up to our own forms of government: even if these do not work always quite so well at home as they once seemed to, they are certain to work better abroad than any other. And another is that "self-government" or "responsible self-government" is the one true hall-mark of a high civilization; and that no other contributions to culture can avail to make a people hold up its head, unless it is also "responsibly governing itself." So we cannot congratulate the Labour Government on any wisdom or originality in its foreign policy; but merely on demonstrating that the Conservative Government was no better.

It would however be not only unfair, but dangerous self-deception, if we blamed the weak heads of contemporary ministers, ex-ministers, and Parliamentarians in general for the present depressing state of affairs at home and abroad. The rot in Parliament is only a symptom of the rot without; and outside also mediocrity of mind and spirit is to be found conspicuous. The need is for causes for which sacrifices can be made: one might cheerfully submit to even higher taxes were there reason to believe that the money thus squeezed would be anything but squandered. The pathetic desire for a cause, for something simple to believe in, is shown by the partial acclamation of Lord Beaverbrook's flimsy proposals. On one page of his sixpenny pamphlet he commends the "empire free trade" of the United States; and on another he shows us how clever the Germans are to prohibit the export of potatoes from East Prussia into the rest of Germany, with the result that they are dumped into England.[3] Such a pinchbeck policy could only command attention in default of anything at all serious, and, we might add, of more intense spiritual appeal as well as greater practical utility.

THE STANDARD OF LIVING

"Self-determination" or "responsible self-government" is a catchword; "the standard of living" is another. It is freely used by Protectionists and by Trade Unionists (two divisions of interest only temporarily put asunder by Mr. Snowden).[4] One would suppose, at every flourish of this unctious[5] phrase, that the British working man was up to this moment in a privileged position in the world; that he was far better off than any other working man; and that he had not only the privilege but the duty of supporting civilization, a weary Atlas, by his so-called "standard."[6] The phrase may be questioned from two sides: an answer to both may be found by pointing to the working class family of six (which does exist) living in four rooms with a wireless set. What *is* our standard of living? Is it overcrowding in a small and unsanitary house, or overcrowding in a large and sanitary and cheerless workmen's dwellings? Is it shrimps for tea, or a gramophone or a wireless set? Is it the dole, or thirty-five shillings a week on the land?[7] Is the British working man, in other words, very much better off than the French or German or Italian working man; and if so, are the ways in which he is better off ways in which it is *good* to be better off? We only ask these questions; suggesting that they are not so simple as they may appear; for the true "standard of living," at all events, raises moral and spiritual, as well as economic questions; and suggests also the more humble answer that the British standard of living would be higher if the British working woman knew a little more about cooking, and the British working man and woman a little more about eating; and if simple natural pleasures, such as fresh air and country walks in fine weather, could be more usual, even if cinemas and wireless sets were more costly. As for the "standard of living" of the more affluent class, it seems at present to involve long week-ends, and golf, tennis, and motoring on Sunday. The Roman empire left behind it at least a few ruined temples, aqueducts, and walls; one is sometimes inclined to wonder whether the British will leave, for the future archaeologist, anything better than the traces of innumerable golf courses, and a number of corroded fowling-pieces,[8] scattered like primitive arrow-heads, over the desolate wastes of Scottish moors.

NOTES

1. In response to the deepening economic Depression, Philip Snowden (1864-1937), Chancellor of the Exchequer, had implemented an unpopular budget, increasing income tax, surtax, and introducing a tax on land values. On 7 July 1930, TSE referred in a letter to F. S. Oliver to the "Vulture Snowden" (*L5* 242). Snowden had succeeded Churchill as Chancellor of the Exchequer. On 23 Feb 1931, TSE warned Bonamy Dobrée against a National Government made up of a "Union of all the Old Gangs, with L. George, Snowden, Churchill [et al.]" (*L5* 490); in fact, Churchill was isolated within the Conservative Party and was excluded from the National Government of 1931.

2. Foreign affairs successes that have been ascribed to Ramsay MacDonald's second Labour Government include the strengthening of relations with Germany (negotiating an earlier Allied withdrawal from the Rhineland) and with the United States (an agreement was reached on naval disarmament), as well as the moves referred to by TSE to transform the British Empire into a Commonwealth of independent states, but which precipitated a campaign of

civil disobedience in India. On 16 Oct 1930, TSE told the Rev. Geoffrey Curtis that he had enjoyed meeting Curtis's father and "talking to him about Indian affairs."

3. Baron Beaverbrook, *My Case for Empire Free Trade* (1930).

4. Protectionists and Trade Union leaders were both opposed to Snowden's economic policies.

5. Unctious: unctuous (OED common ca. 1600-1725).

6. Atlas was a Titan, one of the older family of Greek gods, condemned by Zeus to support the pillars of the universe on his shoulders.

7. The dole was the popular name in Britain for the unemployment relief introduced since World War I; at this time of rising unemployment some economists proposed cutting this relief by 20%.

8. Fowling-pieces: guns used for shooting wildfowl.

To the Editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*[1]

St. Louis Post-Dispatch (15 Oct 1930) 3B

As I spent the first 16 years of my life in St. Louis, with the exception of summer holidays in Maine and Massachusetts, and a visit to Louisiana which I do not remember, it is self-evident that St. Louis affected me more deeply than any other environment has done. These 16 years were spent in a house at 2635 Locust Street, since demolished. This house stood on part of a large piece of land which had belonged to my grandfather on which there had been Negro quarters also in his time; in my childhood my grandmother still lived at a house 2660 Washington Avenue, round the corner. The earlier personal influence I remember, besides that of my parents was an Irish nursemaid named Annie Dunne, to whom I was greatly attached; she used to take me to my first school, a Mrs. Lockwood's, which was a little way out beyond Vandeventer place.[2] The river also made a deep impression on me; and it was a great treat to be taken down to the Eades Bridge in flood time.

Then I was sent naturally to the now defunct Smith Academy, which was then somewhere at the lower end of Washington Avenue; I graduated from there with some distinction, having produced the Class Poem, which even now seems to me not bad.[3] I remember with particular regard Mme. Jouvet-Kaufmann, the French mistress, who gave me my first taste for that language, Mr. Roger Hatch, the English master, who encouraged my first attempts at verse, and Dr. Jackson, the Latin master – the third and last subject in which I attained any proficiency.[4] I left St. Louis in 1905, to go to Milton Academy in Massachusetts; and apart from a few Christmas holidays, I have never seen St. Louis again.[5†]

I find that as one gets on in middle life the strength of early associations and the intensity of early impressions becomes more evident, and many little things, long forgotten recur. The occasions on which my nurse took me with her to the little Catholic church which then stood on the corner of Locust Street and Jefferson Avenue, when she went to make her devotions; spring violets, and the rather mangy buffalo which I photographed in Forest Park; the steamboats blowing in the New Year's day, and so on.[6]

And I feel that there is something in having passed one's childhood beside the big river, which is incommunicable to those who have not. Of course my people were Northerners and New Englanders, and of course I have spent many years out of America altogether; but Missouri and the Mississippi have made a deeper impression on me than any other part of the world. Besides, my father gave a good part of his life, and my grandfather, the greater part, to the service of St. Louis and the State; and my mother took a leading part in Juvenile Court reform there, and they all lie in Bellefontaine now.[7]

NOTES

1. Marquis W. Childs, editor of the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch Sunday Magazine*, wrote to TSE to request a paragraph explaining how growing up in St. Louis affected him, to which TSE responded in this letter of 8 Aug. The letter appeared in John G. Neihardt's column "Of Making Many Books," which he devoted to Childs's presentation of TSE's letter, under the title "From a Distinguished Former St. Louisan." Childs pointed out that TSE comes from "a family distinguished in American intellectual life" and that he "has so long been an expatriate that he is more often regarded as an English rather than an American author. . . . His views on his American backgrounds and St. Louis in particular have, therefore, a very special interest." The salutation and opening sentence of TSE's letter were deleted: "Dear Sir, / I have your letter of August (sic) 1930; and am very happy to comply as well as I can with your request. But it is very puzzling to try to condense a biography, an 'attitude,' and an estimate of how St. Louis affected me, in a paragraph." TSE's "(sic)" notes Childs's dating error for 22 July 1930.

2. In "Why Mr. Russell Is a Christian" (1927), TSE recalled discussing the proofs of God's existence at the age of six with his nurse Annie Dunne, Missouri-born daughter of Irish parents from County Cork and mother of six children (3.151, n.7). Mrs. Ellen Lockwood (1855-98), a friend of the Eliot family, operated a private primary school for boys, The Lockwood School at 3841 Delmar Avenue, which TSE attended from 1895 until 1898.

3. When TSE's mother was shown the *Smith Academy Record* containing his prize poem "A Lyric" (1905), he recalled her comment "that she thought it better than anything in verse she had ever written" (*L1* 819).

4. TSE attended Smith Academy from 1898 to 1905. Mme. Julia Jouvet-Kaufmann (1846-1921), also taught French at Washington University; Roger Conant Hatch (1878-1943), a graduate of Harvard University, taught English and Elocution; Edward Fisher Jackson (born ca. 1862), a graduate of Washington University, taught Latin and History. TSE recalled with gratitude these three and other teachers in his 1953 address at Washington University, "American Literature and the American Language," adding that "Mr. Hatch . . . commended warmly my first poem, written as a class exercise, at the same time asking me suspiciously if I had had any help in writing it."

5†. The opening sentence of the next paragraph and following word were deleted: "I do not quite know what else to say. But"

6. TSE saw buffalo at Forest Park during the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair.

7. TSE's grandfather William Greenleaf Eliot, established the first Unitarian church in St. Louis in 1834, founded Washington University in 1853 and Smith Academy in 1854; he served

as president of the university's first board of trustees and resigned his pastorate to become chancellor in 1871. TSE's father Henry Ware Eliot, Sr., served as president of the Academy of Science in 1902, as a trustee of the Missouri Botanical Garden in 1902-03, and as a member of the board of trustees of Washington University from 1877 until his death in 1919. Charlotte Champe Eliot was instrumental in the passage of the Probation Law of 1901, the Juvenile Court Law of 1903, and the establishment of a house of detention for juveniles in 1906.

Cyril Tourneur[1]

Although the tragedies which make immortal the name of Cyril Tourneur are accessible to everyone in the Mermaid edition, it is still an event to have a new edition of the "work" of this strange poet.[2] Fifty-two years have passed since the edition in two volumes by Churton Collins. And this sumptuous critical edition of Professor Nicoll's reminds us that it is time to revalue the work of Tourneur.[3]

None of the Elizabethan dramatists is more puzzling; none offers less foothold for the scholarly investigator; and none is more dangerous for the literary critic. We know almost nothing of his life; we trace his hand in no collaboration.[4] He has left only two plays; and it has been doubted even whether the same man wrote both; and if he did, as most scholars agree, there is still some doubt as to which he wrote first. Yet in no plays by any minor Elizabethan is a more positive personality revealed than in *The Revenger's Tragedy*. No Elizabethan dramatist offers greater temptation: to the scholar, to hazard conjecture of fact; and to the critic, to hazard conjecture of significance. We may be sure that what Mr. Nicoll does not know is unknown to anybody; and it is no disrespect to his scholarship and diligence to remark how little, in the fifty-two years of Elizabethan research since Collins, has been added to our knowledge of the singular poet with the delightful name. Churton Collins, in his admirable introduction, really knows nothing at all about the man's life; and all that later students have been able to do is to piece together several probable shreds.[5] That there was a family of Tourneurs is certain; the precise place in it of Cyril is, as Mr. Nicoll freely admits, a matter of speculation. And, with all the plausible guesses possible, Mr. Nicoll tells us that Tourneur's "whole early life is a complete blank" [8]. What he does give us is good reason for believing that Tourneur, with perhaps other members of the family, was a servant of the Cecils; and he adds to our knowledge a prose piece, "The Character of Robert Earl of Salisbury."[6] Besides the two tragedies, he also gives "The Transformed Metamorphosis," the "Funeral Poem upon the Death of Sir Francis Vere," and the Elegy on the death of Prince Henry, already canonically attributed to Tourneur; and "Laugh and Lie Down," a satirical pamphlet, no better and no worse than dozens of others, which is probably

Tourneur's – at least, it is attributed to him, and there is no particular reason why he should not be the author.[7]

The information of fifty years is meagre and probably will never be improved. It is astonishingly incongruous with what we feel we know about Tourneur after reading the two plays: two plays as different from all plays by known Elizabethans as they are from each other. In Elizabethan drama, the critic is rash who will assert boldly that any play is by a single hand. But with each of these, *The Atheist's Tragedy* and *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the literary critic feels that, even were there some collaboration, one mind guided the whole work; and feels that the mind was not that of one of the other well-known dramatic writers. Certainly, Tourneur has made a very deep impression upon the minds of those critics who have admired him. It is to be regretted, however, that Professor Nicoll, at the beginning of his otherwise sober and just introduction, has quoted the hysterical phrases of Marcel Schwob's *vie imaginaire* of Tourneur. To say that Tourneur *naquit de l'union d'un dieu inconnu avec une prostituée* is a pardonable excess of a romantic period, a pardonable excess on the part of a poet discovering a foreign poet.[8] But this is not criticism; and it is a misleading introduction to the work of a man who was a great English poet; and it produces an impression which is increased by the excellent but too *macabre* decorations of Mr. Carter.[9] What matters first is the beauty of the verse and the unity of the dramatic pattern in the two plays.

The author of *The Atheist's Tragedy* and *The Revenger's Tragedy* belongs critically among the earlier of the followers of Shakespeare. If Ford and Shirley and Fletcher represent the decadence, and Webster the last ripeness, then Tourneur belongs a little earlier than Webster. He is nearer to Middleton, and has some affinity to that curious and still underestimated poet Marston. The difference between his mind and that of Webster is very great; if we assigned his plays to any other known dramatist, Webster would be the last choice.[10] For Webster is a slow, deliberate, careful writer, very much the conscious artist. He was incapable of writing so badly or so tastelessly as Tourneur sometimes did, but he is never quite so surprising as Tourneur sometimes is. Moreover, Webster, in his greatest tragedies, has a kind of pity for *all* of his characters, an attitude towards good and bad alike which helps to unify the Webster pattern. Tourneur has no such feeling for any of his characters; and in this respect is nearer, as Professor Stoll has pointed out and Professor Nicoll has reminded us, to the author of *Antonio and Mellida*.[11] Of all his other contemporaries, Middleton is the nearest.

But Mr. Nicoll, we think quite rightly, rejects Mr. E. H. C. Oliphant's theory that Middleton is the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and with Mr. Dugdale Sykes restores the play to Tourneur.[12] And, in spite of Mr. Oliphant's weight of probabilities, there is one quality of Middleton which we do not find in the two plays attributed to Tourneur. The finest of the tragic characters of Middleton live in a way which differs from Tourneur's, not in degree but kind; and they have flashes of a kind of satiric wit unknown to Tourneur, in whom wit is supplied by a fierce grotesquerie. In reading one play of Middleton, either *The Changeling* or *Women Beware Women*, for instance, we can recognize an author capable of considerable variety in his dramatic work; in reading either of Tourneur's plays we recognize a narrow mind, capable at most of the limited range of Marston.

Indeed, none of the characters of Tourneur, even the notable Vindice, the protagonist of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, is by himself invested with much humanity either for good or evil. But dramatic characters may live in more than one way; and a dramatist like Tourneur can compensate his defects by the intensity of his virtues. Characters should be real in relation to our own life, certainly, as even a very minor character of Shakespeare may be real; but they must also be real in relation to each other; and the closeness of emotional pattern in the latter way is an important part of dramatic merit. The personages of Tourneur have, like those of Marston, and perhaps in a higher degree, this togetherness. They may be distortions, grotesques, almost childish caricatures of humanity, but they are all distorted to scale. Hence the whole action, from their appearance to their ending, "no common action" indeed, has its own self-subsistent reality. For closeness of texture, in fact, there are no plays beyond Shakespeare's, and the best of Marlowe and Jonson, that can surpass *The Revenger's Tragedy*. Tourneur excels in three virtues of the dramatist: he knew how, in his own way, to construct a plot, he was cunning in his manipulation of stage effects, and he was a master of versification and choice of language. *The Revenger's Tragedy* starts off at top speed, as every critic has observed; and never slackens to the end. We are told everything we need to know before the first scene is half over; Tourneur employs his torrent of words with the greatest economy. The opening scene, and the famous Scene V of Act III, are remarkable feats of melodrama; and the suddenness of the end of the final scene of Act V matches the sudden explosiveness of the beginning.[13]

Before considering the detail of the two plays, we must face two problems which have never been solved and probably never will be: whether the two plays are by the same hand and, if so, in which order they were written. For the first point, the consensus of scholarship, with the exception of Mr. Oliphant's brilliant ascription of *The Revenger's Tragedy* to Middleton – an ascription which leaves the other play more of a mystery than before – assigns the two plays to Tourneur. For the second point, the consensus of scholarship is counter to the first impressions of sensibility; for all existing evidence points to the priority of *The Revenger's Tragedy* in time. The records of Stationers' Hall cannot be lightly disregarded; and Mr. Dugdale Sykes, who is perhaps our greatest authority on the texts of Tourneur and Middleton, finds stylistic evidence also.[14] Professor Nicoll accepts the evidence, although pointing out clearly enough the anomaly. Certainly, any testimony drawn from the analogy of a modern poet's experience would urge that *The Atheist's Tragedy* was immature work, and that *The Revenger's Tragedy* represented a period of full mastery of blank verse.[15] It is not merely that the latter play is in every way the better; but that it shows a highly original development of vocabulary and metric, unlike that of every other play and every other dramatist. The versification of *The Revenger's Tragedy* is of a very high order indeed. And yet, with the evidence before us, summed up briefly in Mr. Nicoll's preface, we cannot affirm that this is the later play. Among all, the curiosities of that curious period, when dramatic poets worked and developed in ways alien to the modern mind, this is one of the most curious. But it is quite possible. We may conjecture either that *The Atheist's Tragedy* was composed, or partly composed, and laid by until after *The Revenger's Tragedy* was written and entered. Or that after exhausting his best inspiration on the latter play – which certainly bears every internal evidence of having been written straight off in one sudden heat – Tourneur, years after, in colder blood, with more attention to successful models – not only Shakespeare but also perhaps Chapman – produced *The Atheist's Tragedy*, with more regular verse, more conventional moralizing, more conventional scenes, but with here and there flashes of the old fire. Not that the scenes of *The Atheist's Tragedy* are altogether conventional; or, at least, he trespasses beyond the convention in a personal way. There was nothing remarkable in setting a graveyard scene at midnight; but we feel that to set it for the action of a low assignation and an attempted rape at the same time seems more to be expected of the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy* than of anyone else; while the low comedy, more low than comic, does not seem of the taste of either Webster or Middleton.[16] Webster's farcical prose is harmonious with his tragic verse; and in this respect Webster is a worthy follower of the tradition of the Porter in *Macbeth*. Middleton again, in his tragedies, has a different feel of the relation of the tragic and the comic; whereas the transitions in the two tragedies of Tourneur – and especially in *The Atheist's Tragedy* – are exactly what one would expect from a follower of Marston; especially in *The Atheist's Tragedy*, they have that offensive tastelessness which is so positive as to be itself a kind of taste, which we find in the work of Marston.

The Atheist's Tragedy is indeed a peculiar brew of styles. It has well-known passages like the following:[17]*

Walking next day upon the fatal shore,
Among the slaughtered bodies of their men,
Which the full-stomached sea had cast upon
The sands, it was my unhappy chance to light
Upon a face, whose favour when it lived
My astonished mind informed me I had seen.
He lay in his armour, as if that had been
His coffin; and the weeping sea (like one
Whose milder temper doth lament the death
Of him whom in his rage he slew) runs up
The shore, embraces him, kisses his cheek;
Goes back again, and forces up the sands
To bury him, and every time it parts
Sheds tears upon him, till, at last (as if
It could no longer endure to see the man
Whom it had slain, yet loth to leave him) with
A kind of unresolved unwilling pace,
Winding her waves one in another, (like
A man that folds his arms, or wrings his hands
For grief) ebbed from the body, and descends;
As if it would sink down into the earth
And hide itself for shame of such a deed.[18]

The present writer was once convinced that *The Atheist's Tragedy* was the earlier play.[19] But lines like these, masterly but artificial, might well belong to a later period; the regularity of the versification, the elaboration of the long-suspended sentences, with three similes expressed in brackets, remind us even of Massinger. It is true that Charles Lamb, commenting on this passage, refers this parenthetical style to Sir Philip Sidney, who "seems to have set the example to Shakespeare";[20] but these lines have closer syntactical parallels, in Massinger than in Shakespeare. But lines like

> To spend our substance on a minute's pleasure[21]

remind one of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, and lines like

> Your gravity becomes your perished soul
> As hoary mouldiness does rotten fruit[22]

of *The Revenger's Tragedy* where it is likest Middleton.

As a parallel for admitting the possibility of *The Atheist's Tragedy* being the later play, Professor Nicoll cites the fact that *Cymbeline* is later than *Hamlet*.[23] This strikes us as about the most unsuitable parallel that could be found. Even though some critics may still consider *Cymbeline* as evidence of "declining powers," it has no less a mastery of words than *Hamlet*, and possibly more; and, like every one of Shakespeare's plays, it adds something or develops something not explicit in any previous play; it has its place in an orderly sequence.[24] Now accepting the canonical order of Tourneur's two plays, *The Atheist's Tragedy* adds nothing at all to what the other play has given us; there is no development, no fresh inspiration; only the skilful but uninspired use of a greater metrical variety. Cases are not altogether wanting, among poets, of a precocious maturity exceeding the limits of the poet's experience – in contrast to the very slow and very long development of Shakespeare – a maturity to which the poet is never again able to catch up. Tourneur's genius, in any case, is in *The Revenger's Tragedy*; his talent only in *The Atheist's Tragedy*.

Indeed, *The Revenger's Tragedy* might well be a specimen of such isolated masterpieces. It does express – and this, chiefly, is what gives it its amazing unity – an intense and unique and horrible vision of life; but is such a vision as might come, as the result of few or slender experiences, to a highly sensitive adolescent with a gift for words. We are apt to expect of youth only a fragmentary view of life; we incline to see youth as exaggerating the importance of its narrow experience and imagining the world as did Chicken Licken.[25†] But occasionally the intensity of the vision of its own ecstasies or horrors, combined with a mastery of word and rhythm, may give to a juvenile work a universality which is beyond the author's knowledge of life to give, and to which mature men and women can respond. Churton Collins's introduction to the works is by far the most penetrating interpretation of Tourneur that has been written; and this introduction, though Collins believed *The Revenger's Tragedy* to be the later play, and although he thinks of Tourneur as a man of mature experience, does not invalidate this theory.[26] "Tourneur's great defect as a dramatic poet", says Collins, "is undoubtedly the narrowness of his range of vision:" [lii] and this narrowness of range might be that of a young man. The cynicism, the loathing and disgust of humanity, expressed consummately in *The Revenger's Tragedy* are immature in the respect that they exceed the object.[27] Their objective equivalents are characters practising the grossest vices; characters which seem merely to be spectres projected from the poet's inner world of nightmare, some horror beyond words. So the play is a document on humanity chiefly because it is a document on one human being, Tourneur; its motive is truly the death motive, for it is the loathing and horror of life itself. To have realized this motive so well is a triumph; for the hatred of life is an important phase – even, if you like, a mystical experience – in life itself.

The Revenger's Tragedy, then, is in this respect quite different from any play by any minor Elizabethan;[28†] it can, in this respect, be compared only to *Hamlet*. Perhaps, however, its quality would he better marked by contrasting it with a later work of cynicism and loathing, *Gulliver's Travels*.[29] No two compositions could be more dissimilar. Tourneur's "suffering, cynicism and despair" [liii], to use Collins's words, are static; they might be prior to experience, or be the fruit of but little; Swift's is the progressive cynicism of the mature and disappointed man of the world. As an objective comment on the world, Swift's is by far the more terrible.[30] For Swift had himself enough pettiness, as well as enough sin of pride, and lust of dominion, to be able to expose and condemn mankind by its universal pettiness and pride and vanity and ambition; and his poetry, as well as his prose, attests that he hated the very smell of the human animal. We may think as we read Swift, "how loathesome [sic] human beings are"; in reading Tourneur we can only think, "how terrible to loathe human beings so much as that." For you cannot make humanity horrible merely by presenting human beings as consistent and monotonous maniacs of gluttony and lust.

Collins, we think, tended to read into the plays of Tourneur too much, or more than is necessary, of a lifetime's experience. Some of his phrases, however, are memorable and just. But what still remains to be praised, after Swinburne and Collins and Mr. Nicoll, is Tourneur's unique style in blank verse.[31] His occasional verses are mediocre at best; he left no lyric verse at all; but it is hardly too much to say that, after Marlowe, Shakespeare and Webster, Tourneur is the most remarkable technical innovator – an innovator who found no imitators. The style of *The Revenger's Tragedy* is consistent throughout; there is little variation, but the rapidity escapes monotony.

> Faith, if the truth were known, I was begot
> After some gluttonous dinner; some stirring dish
> Was my first father, when deep healths went round
> And ladies' cheeks were painted red with wine,
> Their tongues, as short and nimble as their heels,
> Uttering words sweet and thick; and when they rose,
> Were merrily disposed to fall again.
> In such a whispering and withdrawing hour . . .
>
> . . . and, in the morning
> When they are up and drest, and their mask on,
> Who can perceive this, save that eternal eye
> That, sees through flesh and all? Well, if anything be damned.
> It will be twelve o'clock at night. . . .[32]

His verse hurries:

> O think upon the pleasure of the palace!
> Secured ease and state! the stirring meats,
> Ready to move out of the dishes, that e'en now
> Quicken when they are eaten!
> Banquets abroad by torchlight! music! sports!
> Bareheaded vassals, that had n'er the fortune
> To keep on their own hats, but let horns wear 'em!
> Nine coaches waiting – hurry, hurry, hurry –[33]

His phrases seem to contract[34†] the images in his effort to say everything in the least space, the shortest time:

> Age and bare bone
> Are e'er allied in action . . .
>
> To suffer wet damnation to run through 'em . . .
>
> The poor benefit of a bewildering minute . . .[35]

(*Bewildering* is the reading of the "Mermaid" text ; both Churton Collins and Mr. Nicoll give *bewitching* without mentioning any alternative reading: it is a pity if they be right, for *bewildering* is much the richer word here.)[36]

forgetful feasts . . .

falsify highways . . .[37]

And the peculiar abruptness, the frequent change of tempo, characteristic of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, is nowhere better shown than by the closing lines:

This murder might have slept in tongueless brass,
But for ourselves, and the world died an ass.
Now I remember too, here was Piato
Brought forth a knavish sentence once;
No doubt (said he), but time
Will make the murderer bring forth himself.
'Tis well he died; he was a witch.
And now, my lord, since we are in for ever,
This work was ours, which else might have been slipped!
And if we list, we might have nobles clipped,
And go for less than beggars; but we hate
To bleed so cowardly: we have enough,
I' faith, we're well, our mother turned, our sister true,
We die after a nest of dukes. Adieu![38]

The versification, as indeed the whole style of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, is not that of the last period of the great drama. Although so peculiar, the metric of Tourneur is earlier in style than that of the later Shakespeare, or Fletcher, or Webster; to say nothing of Massinger, or Shirley, or Ford. It seems to derive, as much as from anyone's, from that of Marston. What gives Tourneur his place as a great poet is this one play, in which a horror of life, singular in his own or any age, finds exactly the right words and the right rhythms.

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally "Cyril Tourneur," *TLS*, 1502 (13 Nov 1930), 925-26, an anonymous review of *The Works of Cyril Tourneur*, ed. Allardyce Nicoll (London: The Fanfrolico Press, 1929). Pp. 344. When this article was first proposed by Bruce Richmond on 18 Mar 1930, TSE replied: "In suggesting that I should write about Tourneur you are exposing me to serious temptation: I want to write about Tourneur more than about any other Elizabethan,

and the occasion may never occur again" (*L5* 121). In 1923, inspired by his dissatisfaction with existing criticism, TSE had resolved to write essays on Tourneur and three other Elizabethan dramatists for the *Criterion*, but the project was abandoned following the appearance of "Four Elizabethan Dramatists: A Preface" (2.503).

2. TSE possessed a copy of the Mermaid Series edition of *Webster and Tourneur* with an introduction and notes by John Addington Symonds (1888).

3. *The Plays and Poems of Cyril Tourneur*, ed. John Churton Collins, 2 vols (London: Chatto & Windus, 1878). Collins (1848-1908) was from 1904 until his death Professor of English at Birmingham University.

Allardyce Nicoll (1894-1976), since 1924 Professor of Drama at East London College, was the author of a multivolume history of British drama after 1660 (1925, 1927, 1930).

4. Nicoll dismissed the conjecture proposed by E. H. C. Oliphant in *Modern Philology* (Jan 1911) that Tourneur may have collaborated in 1613 on *The Honest Man's Fortune* with Nathan Field and John Fletcher.

5. Collins observed that Tourneur's "life is wrapped in impenetrable obscurity" (xv).

6. Nicoll asserted that Tourneur's authorship of the prose elegy *Character of Robert Earle of Salesburye* (1612) had been "definitively established" (26). Robert Cecil, first earl of Salisbury (1563-1612), politician and courtier.

7. *The Transformed Metamorphosis* (1600); *Funerall Poeme upon the Death of the Most Worthy and True Souldier, Sir Francis Vere* (1609); *A Griefe on the Death of Prince Henrie* (1613). The pamphlet *Laugh and Lie Downe* (1605) by "C. T." is only doubtfully attributed to Tourneur.

8. *Trans*: "Was born of the union of an unknown god with a prostitute": quoted from the French writer Marcel Schwob (1867-1905), *Vies imaginaires* (Paris: Cendres, 1896), 207.

9. Frederick Carter (1883-1967), artist and author. Carter's acquaintance D. H. Lawrence described the decorations to *The Works of Cyril Tourneur* as "rather cheap and vulgar." *Selected Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. James T. Boulton (Cambridge UP, 1997), 472.

10. Frederick Gard Fleay said that he would attribute *The Revenger's Tragedy* to John Webster "were it not for the universal consensus of the authorities, founded on some authority unknown to me." *A Biographical Chronicle of the English Drama, 1559-1642*, vol 2 (London: Reeves and Turner, 1891), 272.

11. Nicoll seconded E. E. Stoll's claim that Tourneur was "deeply influenced" (39) by John Marston: "Marston in his youth he clearly admired; *The Revenger's Tragedy* and *The Atheist's Tragedy* are offsprings of the type of drama which the author of *Antonio and Mellida* had evolved" (6).

12. *The Revenger's Tragedy* was published anonymously but first ascribed to Tourneur by the cataloger Edward Archer in a play list of 1656. Henry Dugdale Sykes (ca. 1874-1932) claimed to have "discovered sufficient internal evidence to justify the traditional ascription" to Tourneur (*Notes and Queries*, Sept 1919, 225-29). However, E. H. C. Oliphant (1862-1936), since 1928 Fellow of Sarah Lawrence College, New York, attributed the play on metrical and stylistic grounds to Thomas Middleton (*Studies in Philology*, 1926, 157-68). On 18 Dec, Oliphant wrote to the *TLS* to defend his theory, which has been subsequently supported by modern scholars. TSE's reply to Oliphant appeared in the *TLS* on 1 Jan 1931, 12 (4.221).

13. The play opens with Vindice, the revenger, holding the skull of his poisoned beloved; in III.v Vindice contrives his revenge by tricking the old Duke to kiss the poisoned skull of his dead

lady; the play ends with Vindice and his brother Hippolito, disguised as masquers, assassinating the corrupt noblemen at court, before admitting their crimes and being condemned to death.

14. *The Revenger's Tragedy* was entered on the Stationers' Register in 1607 and *The Atheist's Tragedy* in 1611. Sykes concurred with Stoll in finding "the more sparing use of rime and the abundant light and weak endings in *The Atheist's Tragedy* as marks of a later stage in the development of Tourneur's metrical technique" (*Notes and Queries*, Sept 1919, 229).

15. On 17 Feb 1922, TSE wrote to Sykes: "I find myself still of the opinion that Tourneur's [*The Atheist's Tragedy*] precedes [*The Revenger's Tragedy*], though this opinion is that only of a poetical practitioner, not of a scholar. Everything that denotes development as a poet, I find in [*The Revenger's Tragedy*]" (*L1* 635-36).

16. In the graveyard scene (IV.iii), the atheist of the play's title, D'Amville, attempts to rape his daughter-in-law Castabella but is prevented by his nephew Charlemont.

17*. TSE's note: "The text used in the following quotations is the critical text of Professor Nicoll; but for convenience and familiarity the modernized spelling and punctuation of the *Mermaid* text is used."

18. *The Atheist's Tragedy* II.i.85-106.

19. In "Philip Massinger" (1919), TSE called *The Atheist's Tragedy* "apprentice work"; he revised this remark to "secondary work" when the essay appeared in *Selected Essays* (1932) (2.249).

20. TSE refers to Charles Lamb's comments in *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, Who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare* (London: John Bumper, 1813), 181, n.61.

21. *The Atheist's Tragedy* I.i.31.

22. *The Atheist's Tragedy* I.iv.143-44.

23. "Shakespeare wrote *Cymbeline* after *Hamlet*" states Nicoll, "[a] writer may rise and fall just as easily as he may fall and rise" (23).

24. TSE was indebted to G. Wilson Knight's interpretation in *Myth and Miracle* (1929) of Shakespeare's final plays as an integral part of what Knight called the "Shakespearian Progress."

25†. In *TLS*: "Chicken Little." Chicken Little or Chicken Licken is a fable in which a chicken believes unreasonably that the world is about to end.

26. Collins described *The Revenger's Tragedy* as "the first [play] undoubtedly, in order of merit, but the last, I am convinced, in order of composition" (xxxii) and "plainly the work of a practised and experienced hand" (xxxvi).

27. TSE alludes to his theory of the "objective correlative" advanced in "Hamlet" (1919) (2.125).

28†. In *TLS*: "any other minor"

29. In "Andrew Marvell" (1921), TSE called Swift "the great master of disgust" (2.310).

30. In "English Satire" (1925), TSE said that in Swift satire "rose as near to the highest as it ever has risen, or ever is likely to rise" (2.595). Swinburne contrasts the despair of Tourneur and Swift in *The Age of Shakespeare* (1908).

31. In *The Age of Shakespeare*, Swinburne praised Tourneur for the "fiery jet of his molten verse" (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), 177.

32. *The Revenger's Tragedy* I.ii.200-07 and I.iii.111-15.

33. *The Revenger's Tragedy* II.i.222-28.

34†. In *TLS*: "telescope"

35. *The Revenger's Tragedy* III.v.56-57, 62, 78.

36. The correct reading is "bewitching" as in Middleton's "this bewitching minute" (*The Widow* V.i). The OED's first instance of the adjective "bewildering" is taken from Wordsworth in 1792. On 4 Feb 1937, TSE remarked in a letter to Simon Nowell Smith, "the Mermaid edition [*Webster and Tourneur*] has no great reputation for [textual] accuracy."

37. *The Revenger's Tragedy* III.v.94, 79.

38. *The Revenger's Tragedy* V.iii.157-69.

Mocking-Birds[1]

To the Editor of *The New Statesman*

The New Statesman, 36 (22 Nov 1930) 203-4

Sir, – I have just read Mr. Brian Howard's interesting remarks about myself in your last issue but one. I was glad also to read Mr. Brooks's historical corrections, which are entirely justified, except that instead of Mr. Huxley, a later arrival, he might have added one or two more eminent names.[2]

It is not however on this subject, whereon I am hardly qualified, that I wish to take up your space. I write as an amateur ornithologist, to protest against Mr. Howard's use of the mockingbird as an illustration. Mr. Howard, no doubt deluded by the name of this unfortunate bird (who is also doubly maligned by his scientific style of *mimus polyglottos*) seems to think that the mockingbird does nothing but mock.[3] I dare say I have listened to more mockingbirds than he has; and my own observation is supported by the great authority of Dr. Frank Chapman, who writes "in my experience many mockingbirds have no notes besides their own, and good mockers are exceptional." I have less knowledge of nightingales, except for their literary associations which are useful; but I am ready to affirm that a fine mockingbird in his own pure-song is at least the nightingale's equal. Dr. Chapman also says that the mockingbird "is a good citizen, and courting rather than shunning public life, shows an evident interest in the affairs of the day."[4]

I will add only a few words by another authority, Dr. R.W. Shufeldt, which I do not however quote as a specimen of prose style:

> "I believe were he successfully introduced into those countries where the Nightingale flourishes, that princely performer might some day wince as he was obliged to listen to his own most powerful strains poured forth with all their native purity by this king of feathered mockers."[5]

I am, Sir,
Your obliged servant,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The carbon copy is dated 15 Nov 1930 (*L5* 389); title supplied by *NS*.

2. TSE writes in response to Brian Howard's review of *Ash-Wednesday* in the *NS* of 8 Nov, in which Howard suggests that the influence of Eliot's poetry after World War I affected Georgian nature poetry: "The nightingale had become a mockingbird" (146); and to a letter by the poet Benjamin Gilbert Brooks (ca. 1895-1966) in the *NS* of 15 Nov disputing "the actual historical importance" of Eliot's poetry and grouping him with Yeats, Pound, Ford, Aldington, Huxley, and Graves as members of a "new epoch" (174).

The aesthete Brian Howard (1905-58), author of a volume of poetry titled *God Save the King* (1930), was a contemporary of Evelyn Waugh at Oxford and a model for Anthony Blanche in Waugh's *Brideshead Revisited* (1945). On 28 Aug 1930, Howard had written to TSE inquiring about several contemporary poets (*L5* 303-04).

3. TSE refers to the North American mockingbird whose scientific name *Mimus polyglottos*, or "many-tongued mimic," refers to its ability to mimic the calls of other birds, animals, and even mechanical sounds.

4. *Handbook of Birds of Eastern Northern America* (New York: D. Appleton, 1902), 378, 377. TSE also quotes from his childhood copy of this book (a birthday present from his mother, now held at King's) by the Canadian naturalist Frank M. Chapman (1864-1945) in a note to line 357 of *TWL* (*CPP* 79). On 2 Jan 1930, after receiving a poem titled "Chaffinches" from Julian Bell, TSE replied: "I like your birds very much. They are real birds, to begin with; and I have spent a great deal of time myself in bird study – though in another country" (*L5* 7).

5. TSE quotes the entry on the mockingbird in Alfred Newton's *A Dictionary of Birds* (London: Adam & Charles Black, 1896), 585. American ethnographer and osteologist Robert W. Shufeldt (1850-1934), honorary curator of the Smithsonian Museum, published over a thousand notes on natural history, many on bird anatomy. In a letter of 11 May 1935, TSE reminded Ralph Hodgson: "you know my convictions a good mockingbird can beat the nightingale all holler if you discount the fact of the latter having the advantage of the stage all to himself and people feeling sentimental at that time of night."

The Book of Beauty[1]

To the Editor of *The Nation and Athenaeum*[2]

Sir,
I intervene in this matter with some diffidence and at the risk of being told to mind my own business, but as Mr. Beaton and Mrs. McLaren have so completely distorted what I take to be the point of Mrs. Woolf's letter, I feel that it is not impertinent for an outsider to draw attention to the real issue. And the fact that Mr. Beaton is a very insignificant, though malodorous, insect, does not affect the general vermifugitive principle. I make no doubt that Mr. Beaton is entirely within his legal rights and as, on his own admission, he has once been inside a church, I fear lest we may soon have another *Book of Beauty* of the Virgin Mary and the more select saints. But to my mind Mr. Beaton's position is very much that of a literary pirate in New York.[3] As everybody knows, according to the actual copyright law, American publishers have frequent opportunity of pirating the work of English authors. They would be quite within their legal rights to do so, but the more reputable publishers would never think of filling their lists in this way, and the less reputable suffer from public opinion. Let us hope that Mr. Beaton will have the same experience.[4]

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

[1] In this, his first book of black-and-white drawings and photographic portraits (London: Duckworth, 1930), the photographer Cecil Beaton (1904-80) included two sketches of Virginia Woolf, together with his descriptions of her "chaste and somber beauty" and her "timid, startled eyes set deep, a sharp birdlike nose and firm pursed lips" (37). On 29 Nov Woolf wrote to the editor of *N&A* about their unauthorized inclusion in the book, asking the editor "to give publicity to these facts by way of protest against a method of book-making which seems to me as questionable as it is highly disagreeable to one at least of its victims" (291). Beaton replied as one "last from church" in the issue of 13 Dec to point out "that in such matters the victim is seldom – and never should be – consulted. Which caricaturist ever asks his victim for permission to include him in a book of caricatures – all the less reason to protest against inclusion in a Book of Beauty?" (373).

In the issue of 20 Dec, Woolf countered that everyone "assumes that those who appear in 'Books of Beauty' have given their consent. In this case many people were surprised that consent had been given, and then, when they learnt that consent had not been given, were still more surprised that the drawings should have been published. It is to explain this situation and to save the need of answering inquiries that I write. My protest was against the principle and not against the individual taste" (403). Immediately below, Christabel McLaren (1890-1974), Lady Aberconway, a social beauty and patroness of the arts who was also photographed by her friend Beaton, registered her protest against Woolf's attitude, declaring the drawing "exquisitely like her. It is well that this drawing should be like her, for until now her beauty has been very much the monopoly of her friends and relations; . . . I should not wish posterity to imagine that Mrs. Woolf had no other less sterile beauties than the somewhat muddy one of 'significant form'" (403).

2. Unpublished: Faber letterhead, dated 19 Dec 1930; see *L5* 440-41.

3. In 1926-27, TSE was a victim of the literary piracy of New York editor Samuel Roth, who published "Eeldrop and Appleplex" and the two sections of *Sweeney Agonistes* in separate issues of his *Two Worlds Monthly*. See 3.179 and 3.296.

4. The editor of *N&A*, Harold Wright, returned the letter to TSE, stating that his printers were nervous about its potential for libel and that it "seems to me to be somewhat deficient in that urbanity which generally characterises correspondence in the 'Nation.'" Wright made emendations and deletions for TSE's reconsideration; TSE made irritated comments on the returned letter, but he did not revise or resend it. See *L5* 441, n.1.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 10 (Jan 1931) 307-14

The Times informed us not long ago in a leading article (October 2nd), that "never in our history has there been such a period of popular education as the last year and a half." It further rebuked Sir Martin Conway, who had been grumbling in epistolary form about the state of the Conservative Party, for regretting the extension of the franchise, by putting forward the "irresistible contention that the framework of democracy would not be complete without" – without what? – without the young women of twenty-one.[1]

There are here two interesting problems to examine. One is the nature and value of this "popular education" so vastly and rapidly extended; the other is, what, now that this tasteful piece of joinery, the "framework of democracy," is completed, is the character of the canvas to be found within it?

What *The Times* means by "popular education" is not in this place clear; but we all know what the Press means by political education in general. It means that if we keep the Socialist Party in office until by practical experience, which means getting into plenty of hot water, and running heads against stone walls, and generally by having their minds addled by overwork and worry, the wretched Ministers are reduced to complete incompetence and harmlessness, then the Government will be wiser and sadder and exactly like any other Government.[2] And it also means that during this period we shall keep pointing out all the Government's mistakes to the People; so that the People, also sadder and wiser, will instal by acclamation a really good sound Government. Both assumptions appear to me to be wholly wrong, wrong both as principles and predictions. As principle, they imply that there is no principle except Caution; they deny that there are any fundamental moral divisions in politics, on which men are willing to fight to the end and to suffer and make others suffer. The ideal is the ideal of two parties, or even three, so far as all parties are exactly of the same practice in regard to everything that matters; they must however differ completely on a number of showy points that don't matter; otherwise the newspapers would have nothing to write leading articles about, and the public would lose the fun of that most costly of sports – the Sport of

Democrats – the General Election. It implies, in the end, a theory of politics which is by no means patented by *The Times*; which is nowadays the common property of most papers and most politicians of every stripe; which is indeed, by democratic blessing, the common property of every common subject and citizen; the view that politics has nothing whatever to do with private morals, and that national prosperity and the greatest happiness of the greatest number depend entirely upon the difference between good and bad economic theories.[3] It is further more and more the opinion of the common man that his private morals, except when they infringe criminal law, are nobody's business but his own – unless they bring him within the clutches of the scandal press. Private morals are not only private, but wholly negative. And on the other hand, so far as they are not private, they are made contingent upon economic conditions: so that we may conceivably have, in time, legislation framed to enforce limitation of families (by the usual methods) upon certain parts of the population, and to enforce progenitiveness upon others. With the applause of some of the clergy.

It is not often that I find myself in anything but diametrical opposition to Mr. Middleton Murry; for which reason, when I find myself in accord with him, now and then, I attach some importance to the fact. It is true that when we agree upon principles, we usually find ourselves again in diametrical opposition as to their application: but this again is merely a confirmation of the principle. In the October number of *The Adelphi* in an essay on "Northcliffe as Symbol," Mr. Murry says that the social disease is so radical "that there is only one real remedy – the slow regeneration of the individual man." And he adds "the need of a new asceticism is upon us."[4] I do not like to read of things being "upon us" – so many things, we are told, are always "upon us"; but on this point I am in perfect accord with Mr. Murry. Surely, Mr. Murry and I will disagree again about what form this askesis should take; but that, for the moment, is irrelevant.

And this brings us roundabout back to the point of departure: the catchword of "popular education." Unless popular education is also moral education, it is merely putting firearms into the hands of children. For education in History is vain, unless it teaches us to extract moral and spiritual values from History; and education in Political Economy is vain, an "unearthly ballet of bloodless categories," so long as it is offered as a pure science unfettered by moral principles.[5] I am not depreciating the importance of Economics, but on the contrary elevating it. We need more and better Economics. We need another Ruskin.[6] The trouble with the Science of Economics of to-day is that it appears in a form in which very few people, if any, can understand it. And in a democracy, it is essential that people should understand the matters upon which they are exhorted to make decisions, and that they should not be called upon to decide upon matters which they do not understand. When I read, say, an economic article in *The Referee*, or any of the numerous productions of Major Douglas and his disciples, I am confirmed in my suspicion that conventional economic practice is all wrong, but I can never understand enough to form any opinion as to whether the particular prescription or nostrum proffered is right.[7] I cannot but believe that there are a few simple ideas at bottom, upon which I and the rest of the unlearned are competent to decide according to our several complexions; but I cannot for the life of me ever get to the bottom. I cannot, for instance, believe in over-population so long as there is room in the world for everyone to move about without suffocation; I cannot understand the concurrence of over-production with destitution and I cannot help feeling that this has something to do with people wanting – so far as they are in a position to want anything more than food and shelter – the wrong things, and cultivating the wrong passions. So that we need Economists who will not merely demand of us enough wit to appreciate their own intellectual brilliance, who will not aim to dazzle us by their technical accomplishments, but who can descend to show us the relation between the financial cures that they advocate and our simple human principles and convictions.

I am not even convinced that the accomplished economic specialists of the Harley Street of finance always know what they are about themselves.[8] I have served my own apprenticeship in the City; endeavoured to master the "classics" of the subject; have written (or compiled) articles on Foreign Exchange which occasionally met with approval from my superiors; and I was never convinced that the authorities upon whom I drew, or the expert public which I addressed, understood the matter any better than I did myself – which is not at all.[9] I concluded that there are some gracious natures, which have an instinct for making money (not necessarily for themselves) as the bee makes honey; that there are other sound conscientious natures which can faithfully carry out the innumerable details of an elaborate machine; but how the machine came to be, or what it was ultimately called into the world to accomplish – of that no one seemed to know more than I did, and they differed from myself chiefly in their unquestioning loyalty to it.

I concluded, finally, that a large part of our difficulty arises from a prejudiced notion of what constitutes "science." I do not call into question the obviously respectable sciences of mathematics, physics and chemistry, which do no harm to anybody, but the prejudice that certain "sciences" are more scientific than they are, and that others are not scientific at all. Theology (as an exact study, not as the seven-and-sixpenny Lenten effusions of popular preachers)[10] is conceded to be a science on the same footing as the science of Heraldry – a little lower, that is, than Palmistry and Phrenology.[11] Ethics is a *champ libre* for sentimental essayists, or a *champ clos*[12] for supposedly useless but ornamental university pundits, but has no "scientific" standing whatever. Meanwhile, Political Economy boasts itself as a science as Physics is a science; and Physics is too busy with its own job to stop to repudiate the claims of Economics. And in fact Economics *is* a science, in the humane sense; but it will never take its due place until it recognizes the superior "scientific" authority of Ethics.

The possibility of a relation between politics and morals is admitted even by Mr. Edgar Mowrer, who has written an extremely agreeable, if depressing, little book in the *To-day and To-morrow* series entitled *Sinon: or the Future of Politics* (Kegan Paul, 2s. 6d.). Mr. Mowrer is able to say, as late as page 73 of this book, that "the price" (of preserving our nations and Occidental civilization) is "the recognition and application to politics of scientific principles"; but by the conclusion on page 91 he has come to believe that "better individuals are the only steps to better politics."[13] But perhaps one of our troubles is that we are now offered so many different prescriptions for the individual Good Life. One of the most satisfactory (to me) of recent formulae is that of Mr. F. McEachran (*The Civilized Man*: Faber, 7s. 6d.), but perhaps it is satisfactory to me partly because it does not point to anything novel, but to something highly traditional.[14] I have just read with interest *The Modern Dilemma* by Hugh l'Anson Fausset (Dent, 2s. 6d.), but have not been altogether successful in understanding Mr. Fausset's particular askesis. I cannot feel that Mr. Fausset, who apparently is nearer to Mr. Murry than to anyone else, is in a very strong position for criticizing Mr. Irving Babbitt. Mr. Babbitt is a lucid writer; and my chief difficulty with his philosophy is in understanding and accepting certain recurrent words and phrases. But with Mr. Fausset the difficulty is diffused over each of his pages. These wide generalizations about the "cult of medievalism," "The Church," "The Renaissance" are of a kind that always kindles my distrust; and when I read that the "system [of the Church] . . . with its graded hierarchy could not withstand the rebel forces of the Renaissance" [8], I am about as convinced as if I were told that the system of the Soviets, with its graded hierarchy, could not withstand the rebel forces of Denikin.[15] Nor am I helped very much by being instructed that "if we are to obey the creative purpose of life we must progress" (14). Progress whither? But when my eye lights on the phrase, a couple of pages later, *true inwardness* [16] I begin to feel more at home: for I am breathing the same old stuffy atmosphere of Matthew Arnold's Cloud Cuckoo Land.[16]

But if one sniffs the air of Arnold in Mr. Fausset's book, one is almost suffocated by it in Mr. Julian Huxley's Conway lecture. (*Science, Religion and Human Nature*: Watts, 2s.). Sir Arthur Keith, who appears to be one of the less intelligent of our eminent savants, is so unlucky as to have his introductory remarks reproduced too.[17] Sir Arthur makes one comment which is worth quoting:

> In the genetic "make-up" of Professor Julian Huxley there are blended, Mendelianwise or otherwise, a complex derived from two main sources – a Huxley source and an Arnold source. Now, to my way of thinking, his paternal grandfather was an extreme realist; he insisted on stripping all gloss from the world of humanity, laying its inwards bare to a fearless analysis. The Arnolds were of an opposite strain; they preferred to clothe humanity with idealism; they would rather not see the naked flesh beneath. [9-10]

Sir Arthur has certainly put his finger on the spot: though he forgot to add the words *thou ailest here, and here*![18] For that is just the misfortune of Mr. Julian Huxley: that the Arnold strain is dominant, and the Huxley strain suppressed. In all his lucubrations on Religion, a subject to which he has devoted considerable attention, Mr. Huxley succeeds in averting his eyes from the naked flesh beneath (to use Sir Arthur's slightly indelicate phrase). When we turn from the first professor to the second, we immediately encounter such refreshing phrases as "inspirationism had to be broken down before the free spirit of religion could emerge" [16]. Here is sweetness for you! Here is artificial light![19] "The growth of Anglo-Catholicism" indicates "a tendency to think less of dogma" [17]! And when we learn, very quickly, that religion should be "a function of human nature," that we must study it "not as a problem of theology . . . but as an organic function" [19]; then we are really and truly back in the '70's of the last century.[20]

In our search for that new ascetism, we seem to get into some strange streets. To the hereditary solemnities of Mr. Julian Huxley I much prefer the innocent pranks of Dr. Freud (*Civilization and its Discontents*: Hogarth

Press, 8s. 6d.) and Mr. Bertrand Russell (*The Conquest of Happiness*: Allen and Unwin, 7s. 6d.). Here, we feel, are two sound realists, not abashed by the sight of the naked flesh beneath, but really exulting in the contemplation of it. Yet even here we must be prepared for some disappointment. It is not so much that both books are odd mixtures of shrewdness and commonplace.[21] It is rather that mankind is so constituted that many of us can never hope to rise to that level of mediocrity which these authors exhort us to reach. With more psychology, but therefore less art and a less delicate knowledge of the world, these writers can only echo the words of Remy de Gourmont about contenting ourselves with the *menus plaisirs* of life: *quant aux grands, ils n'existent guère*.[22] It is strange, nevertheless, that in a world which Mr. Russell knows as well as we do, is in a rickety condition, he should be content in his book to preach a gospel of Main Street to the converted.[23]

Leaving, now, these and other of *the strange children*, who *have gone whoring with their own inventions*, let us revert to the isolated dicta of Mr. Murry and Mr. Mowrer.[24] "The need of a new asceticism is upon us," indeed; but a cloistered or solitary asceticism is not enough to save us at the present juncture, unless the world is wholly (and well) lost; so that the few are left *redeeming the time, because the days are evil*,[25] yet perpetually pestered with Income Tax Applications. I am afraid that the new asceticism should not only be practised by the few, but imposed upon the many; else new asceticism will be merely, as it is already for some, old necessity writ large. In other words, whilst the new economists hope to improve the new world for the old Adam, the new psychologists hope to improve the old Adam for the new world; where an impulse capable of disciplining the individual and at the same time increasing his possibilities of development as an independent member of society is needed. Instead of liberty, which most people can hardly appreciate anyway, we are offered licence; instead of order, we are offered mass-production of everything; including art and religion. I do not quite like Mr. Mowrer's "application to politics of scientific principles" [73], because the word *scientific* can be just a comprehensive cloak for quackery; but if we alter the phrase slightly, I find no real contradiction between it and his cry for "better individuals" [91]. But it will not do merely to call for better individuals; the asceticism must first, certainly, be practised by the few, and – it must be definite enough to be explained to, and ultimately imposed upon, the many; imposed in the name of something in which they must be made to believe. It is not the asceticism urged by the *journaux de gros tirage*, to eat more Dominion fruit and prosper.[26] When it comes to asceticism, I prefer to make some concrete suggestion not beyond the strength of any of our readers. As an abstinence for next Lent, I suggest refraining during forty days from reading any newspaper published at a penny. *Par tous les moyens, même légaux*.[27]

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. "A Hungry Sheep," *Times* (2 Oct 1930), 13. This *Times* editorial was responding to a letter published in the same issue by Martin Conway, who wrote to complain that the Conservative Party leader Stanley Baldwin had led loyal followers "into the wilderness," commenting: "We were made to give votes to a mass of young women at a critical moment of their lives when they ought to be thinking about marriage rather than about voting" (8). In Apr 1928, Baldwin's Conservative government had lowered the voting age for women from thirty to twenty-one.

2. The *Times* editorial observed: "the prospects of a Conservative candidate must be brighter after the Socialists have shown during eighteen months what they can do, and above all . . . that there are certain things which no conceivable Government can do" (13).

3. Jeremy Bentham remarked that Joseph Priestley had taught him the "sacred truth": "That the greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of morals and legislation." *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, vol 10 (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1843), 142.

4. *Adelphi*, 1 (Oct 1930), 18.

5. F. H. Bradley warned against philosophical idealism becoming an "unearthly ballet of bloodless categories" in *The Principles of Logic* (London: Kegan, Paul and Trench & Co., 1883), 533.

6. In 1917, TSE gave an Extension lecture titled "Art and Economics – John Ruskin and William Morris": both Victorians were strident critics of laissez-faire capitalism (1.587).

7. *The Referee* was a Sunday newspaper founded in 1877. TSE contributed a message to the paper welcoming the Anglo-Catholic Congress on 29 June 1930 (4.138).

8. TSE's irony: Harley Street, London W1, was renowned for its private specialists in medicine and surgery, some of whom were consulted by TSE and his wife.

9. TSE started work in the Colonial and Foreign Department of Lloyds Bank in Mar 1917. In 1923, he was made head of the Intelligence Department, writing an anonymous monthly article on Foreign Exchanges until his resignation in Nov 1925.

10. Religious pamphlets were often priced at seven shillings and sixpence.

11. Palmistry (OED): "The art or practice of supposedly reading a person's character or future by examining the lines and other features of the hand"; phrenology (OED): "the study of the external conformation of the cranium as an index to the position and degree of the various faculties."

12. *champ libre*: open field; *champ clos*: closed field.

13. *Sinon; or, the Future of Politics* (London: Kegan Paul, 1930). Kegan Paul's "To-day and Tomorrow" series was launched in 1923 by J. B. S. Haldane's *Daedalus; or, the Science of the Future* and published over one hundred titles before it was discontinued in 1931. In 1928, TSE contributed a preface for Mowrer's *This American World* (3.490).

14. TSE published Frank McEachran's "The Tragic Element of Dante's *Commedia*" in the *Criterion* (Dec 1928), 220-37, and employed McEachran (1900-75), a teacher of modern languages at Gresham's School, as a book reviewer for Faber & Faber and the *Criterion*.

15. *The Modern Dilemma* (London: Dent, 1930). The literary journalist Hugh l'Anson Fausset (1895-1965), a critic of Irving Babbitt's humanism, reviewed regularly for the *TLS* during the 1930s. Anton Denikin (1872-1947), Lieutenant General in the White Army during the Russian Civil War, was exiled in 1926 following a decisive defeat in battle.

16. Cloud cuckoo land: an allusion to Aristophanes' comedy *The Birds* in which a perfect city is built in the clouds. TSE had recently attacked Arnold's social criticism in "Arnold and Pater" (1930) (4.176).

17. The evolutionary biologist Julian Huxley (1887-1975) delivered the Conway Memorial Lecture at Conway Hall, Red Lion Square, London on 1 Oct 1930. The remarks of the Chairman, Sir Arthur Keith (1866-1955), museum curator and palaeoanthropologist, were published as the "Prologue" (5-12). On 5 Nov 1930, TSE told Marguerite Caetani: "I cannot give you the title of Julian Huxley's best books, until he has written a good one."

18. From Arnold's "Memorial Verses" (1850), *Poems*, vol 2 (London: Macmillan, 1877), 223.

19. TSE alludes to the "Sweetness and Light" provided by culture and celebrated in chapter 1 of Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy* (1869).

20. TSE refers to the Victorian controversies regarding Darwin's theories of evolution, to which Julian's grandfather, Thomas Huxley, was a prominent contributor.

21. TSE characterized Freud's *The Future of an Illusion* as "shrewd and yet stupid" in the *Criterion* of Dec 1928 (3.161, n.1).

22. *Trans*: "lesser pleasures; as for the great ones, they hardly exist." In "La Dernière Conséquence de l'idéalisme" [The Last Inference from Idealism], Gourmont says "que les hommes n'existent guère que dans la mesure où ils sont pensés par autres hommes, ce qui est la base même de la vie sociale et de la vie unanime" ["Men hardly exist at all except in so far as they are thought by other men, which is the very basis of social life and of 'unanimous' life."] *Lettres à l'Amazone* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1924), 112.

23. Russell observes in his "Preface": "This book is not addressed to the learned . . . I have aimed only at putting together some remarks which are inspired by what I hope is common sense." *The Conquest of Happiness* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1930), 9.

24. Psalm 141:11: "Rid me, and deliver me from the hand of strange children, whose mouth speaketh vanity, and whose right hand is a right hand of falsehood"; Psalm 106:37, 39: "Yea, they sacrificed their sons and their daughters unto devils . . . Thus they were defiled with their own works, and went a whoring with their own inventions"

25. Ephesians 5:16: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil"

26. *journaux à gros tirage*: mass-circulation newspapers. TSE discusses the Empire Free Trade movement launched by the newspaper magnate Lord Beaverbrook in his *Criterion* Commentaries for Jan (4.3), July (4.141), and Oct 1930 (4.190).

27. *Trans*: "By every possible means, even legal ones"; a slogan of the right-wing nationalist movement L'Action Française, coined by Charles Maurras in the concluding sentence of his article "La politique," *L'Action française* (27 Mar 1908), 1.

Tourneur and *The Revenger's Tragedy*

To the Editor of *The Times Literary Supplement*

The Times Literary Supplement, 1509 (1 Jan 1931) 12

Sir, – I am gratified that so distinguished a scholar as Mr. Oliphant should express approval of my article on Cyril Tourneur in your issue of November 13.[1] To the points he raises I should like to reply as briefly as possible.

I am sorry if Mr. Oliphant thinks that I attach excessive importance to the chronology of the Stationers' Register. I am by no means one of those who consider these records decisive. My point is really this: in the absence of any really cogent evidence to the contrary I submit that the evidence of the Stationers' Register must be treated with respect. As I made clear in the article, I was once convinced that *The Atheist's Tragedy* was earlier than *The Revenger's Tragedy*; and I tried to present the considerations which now leave me with an open mind. Mr. Oliphant does not himself offer any strong reasons for believing that *The Revenger's Tragedy* is the later play, and indeed, as he does not believe they are by the same author, he is not in a position to do so.

But I confess I cannot see why Mr. Oliphant should raise this point at all or why he should question the Stationers' Register in this context, inasmuch as he maintains his faith that *The Revenger's Tragedy* was written by Middleton.[2] He says, ". . . would anyone dream for a moment of connecting the play with Tourneur but for the slight shred of external evidence in his favour?"[3]

If there were any considerable body of dramatic work definitely agreed upon to be Tourneur's, and if this body of work was closely similar to *The Atheist's Tragedy* and equally diverse from *The Revenger's Tragedy*, the shred of evidence would be very slight indeed. But, as things are, I cannot help feeling that Mr. Oliphant has concentrated his attention more on the difference between the two plays attributed to Tourneur than on the difference between *The Revenger's Tragedy* and those tragedies which we are sure were written by Middleton. We know more about Middleton than we do about Tourneur; and I submit that the differences between *The Revenger's Tragedy* and the whole of Middleton's work in tragedy are more significant than the differences between the two plays attributed to Tourneur.[4]

I am, Sir, yours,
YOUR REVIEWER

NOTES

1. Written on 19 Dec 1930 in response to E. H. C. Oliphant's letter in the *TLS* of 18 Dec defending the theory of Middleton's authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy*. Oliphant wrote to express his admiration of TSE's anonymous review article "Cyril Tourneur," asserting that "Nothing finer on the subject has been written" (1087).

In "Problems of Authorship in Elizabethan Dramatic Literature," Oliphant noted: "the quiet acceptance of Tourneur's authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy* is strange" (*Modern Philology*, Jan 1911, 427). However, not until the publication of "The Authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy*" did he confidently attribute the play wholly to Middleton on the basis of similarities of tone, expression, syntax, and vocabulary (*Studies in Philology*, 1926, 157-68). TSE published Oliphant's article on "Marlowe's Hand in *Arden of Feversham*" in the *Criterion* for Jan 1926.

2. *The Revenger's Tragedy* was registered in 1607, *The Atheist's Tragedy* in 1611. In his letter, Oliphant questioned whether plays were always entered on the Stationers' Register "in the order of production on the stage?" In a further letter to the *TLS* (5 Feb 1931), Oliphant repeated his contention that "priority of entry . . . does not help in any way to fix the chronology" (99).

3. The "slight shred of external evidence" refers to the bookseller Edward Archer's ascription of the play to Tourneur in his 1656 play list (appended to *The Old Law*). Francis Kirkham followed suit in his play lists of 1661 and 1671.

4. Oliphant later retorted in "Tourneur and Mr. Eliot": "Not only has Mr. Eliot erected his edifice on an unsure foundation; but he has, I think, miscalculated the extent to which the traditional view, his own view, is held by scholars" (*Studies in Philology*, 1935, 547). Summarizing the consensus of modern scholarship, Brian Vickers states: "we know that Middleton, not Tourneur, wrote *The Revenger's Tragedy*." *Shakespeare, Co-Author* (Oxford UP, 2002), 260.

Thoughts after Lambeth[1]

The Church of England washes its dirty linen in public. It is convenient and brief to begin with this metaphorical statement. In contrast to some other institutions both civil and ecclesiastical, the linen does get washed. To have linen to wash is something; and to assert that one's linen never needed washing would be a suspicious boast. Without some understanding of these habits of the Church, the reader of the Report of the Lambeth Conference (1930) will find it a difficult and in some directions a misleading document.[2] The Report needs to be read in the light of previous Reports; with some knowledge, and with some sympathy for that oddest of institutions, the Church of England.[3]

The Conference is certainly more important than any report of it can be. I mean that each Conference has its place in the history of Lambeth Conferences, and that directions and tendencies are more significant than the precise formulation of the results obtained at any particular moment. To say that a significant direction can be traced, is not to applaud any aimless flux. But I suspect that many readers of the Report, especially those outside of the Anglican communion, are prepared to find (or prepared to condemn because they know they will not find) the clear hard-and-fast distinctions and decisions of a Papal Encyclical.[4] Of such is Mr. George Malcolm Thomson, whose lively pamphlet in this series[5]* has given me food for thought. Between a Lambeth Conference Report and a Papal Encyclical there is little similarity; there is a fundamental difference of intent. Perhaps the term "encyclical letter" for the archiepiscopal communication heading the Report is itself misleading, because it suggests to many minds the voice of final authority *de fide et moribus*;[6] and to those who hope for the voice of absoluteness and the words of hard precision, the recommendations and pious hopes will be disappointing. Many, like Mr. Thomson, will exclaim that they find only platitudes, commonplaces, tergiversations and ambiguities.[7] The Report of the Conference is not intended to be an absolute decree on questions of faith and morals; for the matter of that, the opinions expressed have no compulsion until ratified by Convocation.[8] The Report, as a whole, is rather the expression of the ways in which the Church is moving, than an instruction to the faithful on belief and conduct.

Another consideration which we must keep in mind, before venturing to criticize the Report, is the manner of its composition. Some of the Report is to me, I admit at once, mere verbiage; some parts seem to me evasive; some parts seem to me to be badly expressed, at least if the ordinary uninstructed reader is acknowledged; one or two recommendations I deplore. But it ought not to be an occasion to us for mirth that three hundred bishops together assembled should, on pooling their views on most momentous matters, come out with a certain proportion of nonsense. I should not enjoy having to commit myself on any subject to any opinion which should also be that of any two hundred and ninety-nine of my acquaintance. Let us consider the quantity of nonsense that some of our most eminent scientists, professors and men of letters are able, each for himself, to turn out during every publishing season. Let us imagine (if we can imagine such persons agreeing to that extent) the fatuity of an encyclical letter produced by the joint efforts of Mr. H. G. Wells, Mr. Bernard Shaw and Mr. Russell; or Professors Whitehead, Eddington and Jeans; or Dr. Freud, Dr. Jung and Dr. Adler; or Mr. Murry, Mr. Fausset, the Huxley Brothers and the Reverend Dr. Potter of America.[9]

With this comparison in mind, it is, I think, profitable to dispose first of those sections of the Report which are most insipid, and of that which has received most popular notice. I regret that what seem to me some of the best parts of the Report, such as the section on *The Christian Doctrine of God*, have been neglected in favour of those sections about which readers of the penny press are most ready to excite themselves.[10] But if one is writing about the Report, one must be willing to offer one's own comment on these already over-commented sections. The report on "Youth and its Vocation" suggests that the bishops had been listening to ordinary popular drivel on the subject, or ordinary popular drivel about what the bishops themselves are supposed to believe.[11] They begin with a protest which for any intelligent reader should be unnecessary. "We desire at the outset to protest emphatically against the contention that the Youth of to-day are, as a whole, less moral or less religious than youth of previous generations" [188]. It ought to be obvious that the Youth of to-day are not "as a whole" more or less anything than the youth of previous generations. The statement, not having much meaning, need not occupy much attention. "There are also signs of a great intellectual stirring among the rising generation" [188].[12] One could wish that this journalistic hyperbole had been avoided. There can hardly be a great intellectual stirring among a whole generation, because the number of persons in any generation capable of being greatly stirred intellectually is always and everywhere very very small. What the bishops might have said, I think, with justice, is this: that one does find here and there among educated young men a respect for the Church springing from a recognition of the intellectual ability which during two thousand years has gone to its formation. The number of persons interested in philosophy is always small; but whereas twenty years ago a young man attracted by metaphysical speculation was usually indifferent to theology, I believe that to-day a similar young man is more ready to believe that theology is a masculine discipline, than were those of my generation. If the capacity for faith be no greater, the prejudice against it is less; though one must remember to congratulate youth on finding themselves in this situation, before admiring them for taking advantage of it. I hope at this point that of the fifty bishops who committed themselves to the dismal trope that "Youth of this generation . . . has admittedly struck its tents and is on the march" [193],[13] there was a large minority of dissentients. That is one of the troubles of the time: not only Youth but Middle Age is on the march; everybody, at least according to Fleet Street,[14] is on the march; it does not matter what the destination is, the one thing contemptible is to sit still.

Youth, of course, is from one point of view merely a symptom of the results of what the middle-aged have been thinking and saying. I notice that the same fifty bishops refer guardedly to "the published works of certain authors whose recognised ability and position give undue weight to views on the relations of the sexes which are in direct conflict with Christian principles" [189]. I wish that they had mentioned names. For unfortunately, the only two authors of "recognised ability and position" officially disapproved in England, are Mr. James Joyce and D. H. Lawrence;[15] so that the fifty bishops have missed an opportunity of disassociating themselves from the condemnation of these two extremely serious and improving writers.[16*] If, however, the fifty were thinking of Mr. Bertrand Russell or even of Mr. Aldous Huxley, then they are being apprehensive about what to me is a reason for cheerfulness; for if Youth has the spirit of a tomtit[17] or the brain of a goose, it can hardly rally with enthusiasm to these two depressing life-forcers. (Not that Mr. Huxley, who has no philosophy that I can discover, and who succeeds to some extent in elucidating how sordid a world without any philosophy can be, has much in common with Mr. Russell.)[18] I cannot regret that such views as Mr. Russell's, or what we may call the enervate *gospel of happiness*, are openly expounded and defended.[19]

They help to make clear, what the nineteenth century had been largely occupied in obscuring, that there is no such thing as just Morality; but that for any man who thinks clearly, as his Faith is so will his Morals be. Were my religion that of Mr. Russell, my views of conduct would very likely be his also; and I am sure in my own mind that I have not adopted my faith in order to defend my views of conduct, but have modified my views of conduct to conform with what seem to me the implications of my beliefs. The real conflict is not between one set of moral prejudices and another, but between the theistic and the atheistic faith; and it is all for the best that the division should be sharply drawn. Emancipation had some interest for venturous spirits when I was young, and must have been quite exciting to the previous generation; but the Youth to which the bishops' words apply is grey-haired now. Emancipation loses some of its charm in becoming respectable.[20] Indeed, the gospel of happiness in the form preached by Mr. Russell in middle age is such as I cannot conceive as capable of making any appeal to Mr. Russell in youth, so mediocre and respectable is it.[21] It has nothing to offer to those born into the world which Mr. Russell and others helped to create. The elders have had the satisfaction of throwing off prejudices; that is, of persuading themselves that the way they want to behave is the only moral way to behave; but there is not much in it for those who have no prejudices to reject. Christian morals gain immeasurably in richness and freedom by being seen as the consequence of Christian faith, and not as the imposition of tyrannical and irrational habit. What chiefly remains of the new freedom is its meagre impoverished emotional life; in the end it is the Christian who can have the more varied, refined and intense enjoyment of life; which time will demonstrate.

Before leaving the not very remunerative subject of Youth, I must mention another respect, not unrelated, in which Youth of to-day has some advantage over an earlier generation. (I dislike the word "generation," which has been a talisman for the last ten years; when I wrote a poem called *The Waste Land* some of the more approving critics said that I had expressed the "disillusionment of a generation," which is nonsense. I may have expressed for them their own illusion of being disillusioned, but that did not form part of my intention.)[22] One of the most deadening influences upon the Church in the past, ever since the eighteenth century, was its acceptance, by the upper, upper-middle and aspiring classes, as a political necessity and as a requirement of respectability. There are signs that the situation to-day is quite different. When, for instance, I brought out a small book of essays, several years ago, called *For Lancelot Andrewes*, the anonymous reviewer in the *Times Literary Supplement* made it the occasion for what I can only describe as a flattering obituary notice. In words of great seriousness and manifest sincerity, he pointed out that I had suddenly arrested my progress – whither he had supposed me to be moving I do not know – and that to his distress I was unmistakably making off in the wrong direction.[23] Somehow I had failed, and had admitted my failure; if not a lost leader, at least a lost sheep; what is more, I was a kind of traitor; and of those who were to find their way to the promised land beyond the waste one might drop a tear at my absence from the roll-call of the new saints.[24] I suppose that the curiosity of this point of view will be apparent to only a few people. But its appearance in what is not only the best but the most respected and most respectable of our literary periodicals, came home to me as a hopeful sign of the times. For it meant that the orthodox faith of England is at last relieved from its burden of respectability. A new respectability has arisen to assume the burden; and those who would once have been considered intellectual vagrants are now pious pilgrims, cheerfully plodding the road from nowhere to nowhere, trolling their hymns, satisfied so long as they may be "on the march."

These changed conditions are so prevalent that anyone who has been moving among intellectual circles and comes to the Church, may experience an odd and rather exhilarating feeling of isolation. The new orthodoxy, of course, has many forms, and the sectaries of one form sometimes speak hard words of others, but the outline of respectability is fairly clear. Mr. Middleton Murry, whose highly respectable new religion is continually heard to be "on the march" round the corner, though it has not reached us yet,[25]* is able to say of his own version: "the words do not matter. If we can recreate the meaning – all the words of all the religions will be free to us, and we shall not want to use them."[26] One is tempted to suggest that Mr. Murry has so many words in his employ already, including some of his own creation, that he has no need to summon others. A writer still more respectable than Mr. Murry, because he is a Professor at an American University, is Mr. Norman Foerster, the fugleman of Humanism.[27] Mr. Foerster, who has the honest simplicity to admit that he has very little acquaintance with Christianity beyond a narrow Protestantism which he repudiates, offers Humanism because it appeals to those "who can find in themselves no vocation for spiritual humility"![28] without perceiving at all that this is an exact parallel to saying that Companionate Marriage "appeals to those who can find in themselves no vocation for spiritual continence." It is true that to judge from his next paragraph he has at the back of his mind some foggy distinction between "spiritual humility" and "humility" plain, but the distinction, if present, is not developed.[29] One can now be a distinguished professor, and a professional moralist to boot, without understanding the devotional sense of the word *vocation* or the theological sense of the virtue *humility*; a virtue, indeed, not conspicuous among modern men of letters. We have as many, as solemn, and as splendidly robed prophets to-day as in any decade of the last century; and it is now the fashion to rebuke the Christian in the name of some higher "religion" – or more often, in the name of something higher called "religion" plain.

However low an opinion I held of Youth, I could not believe that it can long be deceived by that vacuous word "religion."[30] The Press may continue for a time, for the Press is always behind the times, to organize battues[31] of popular notables, with the religion of a this and of a that; and to excite such persons to talk nonsense about the revival or decay of "religion." Religion can hardly revive, because it cannot decay. To put the matter bluntly on the lowest level, it is not to anybody's interest that religion should disappear. If it did, many compositors would be thrown out of work; the audiences of our best-selling scientists would shrink to almost nothing; and the typewriters of the Huxley brothers would cease from tapping. Without religion the whole human race would die, as according to W. H. R. Rivers, some Melanesian tribes have died, solely of boredom.[32] Everyone would be affected: the man who regularly has a run in his car and a round of golf on Sunday, quite as much as the punctilious churchgoer. Dr. Sigmund Freud, with characteristic delicacy of feeling, has reminded us that we should "leave Heaven to the angels and the sparrows"; following his hint, we may safely leave "religion" to Mr. Julian Huxley and Dr. Freud.[33]

At this point I may make a transition from Youth to another point in the Report, at which I feel that the bishops also had their eyes on Youth. On page 19 we read:

> Perhaps most noteworthy of all, there is much in the scientific and philosophic thinking of our time which provides a climate more favourable to faith in God than has existed for generations.

I cannot help wishing that the Bishops had consulted some of the able theologians and philosophers within the Church (such as Professor A. E. Taylor, who published an excellent article on the God of Whitehead, in

Theology)[34] before they had bestowed this benediction on our latest popular ramp of best-sellers. I do not disagree with the literal sense of the pronouncement which I have just quoted. Perhaps it is rather the tone of excessive amiability that I deprecate. I feel that the scientists should be received as penitents for the sins of an earlier scientific generation, rather than acclaimed as new friends and allies. And it may be an exceptional austerity or insensitiveness on my part, but I cannot consent to take climatic conditions so seriously as the phrase above seems to allow us to do. I do not wish to disparage the possible usefulness of the views set forth by Whitehead and Eddington and others. But it ought to be made quite clear that these writers cannot confirm anyone in the faith; they can merely have the practical value of removing prejudices from the minds of those who have not the faith but who might possibly come to it: the distinction seems to me of capital importance.

One characteristic which increased my suspicion of the scientific paladins of religion is that they are all Englishmen, or at least all Anglo-Saxons. I have seen a few reported remarks on religion and philosophy from the lips of such men as Einstein, Schrödinger and Planck; but they had the excuse of being interviewed by Mr. Sullivan; and the remarks were chiefly interesting, as I imagine Mr. Sullivan intended them to be, for the light they threw on the minds of these interesting scientists; none of these men has so far written a popular book of peeps into the fairyland of Reality.[35] I suspect that there is some taint of Original H. G. Wells about most of us in English-speaking countries; and that we enjoy drawing general conclusions from particular disciplines, using our accomplishment in one field as the justification for theorizing about the world in general.[36] It is also a weakness of Anglo-Saxons to like to hold personal and private religions and to promulgate them. And when a scientist gets loose into the field of religion, all that he can do is to give us the impression which his scientific knowledge and thought has produced upon his everyday, and usually commonplace, personal and private imagination.[37]*

Even, however, in the section on Youth, we may find some wise and true sayings, if we have the patience to look for them. "The best of the younger generation in every section of the community," we are told, "and in every country of the world, are not seeking a religion that is watered down or robbed of the severity of its demands, but a religion that will not only give them a sure basis and an ultimate sanction for morals, but also a power to persevere in reaching out after the ideal which in their heart of hearts they recognise as the finest and the best" [195]. I wish that this might have been said in fewer words, but the meaning is sound, and cannot be repeated too often. There is no good in making Christianity easy and pleasant; "Youth," or the better part of it, is more likely to come to a difficult religion than to an easy one. For some, the intellectual way of approach must be emphasized; there is need of a more intellectual laity. For them and for others, the way of discipline and asceticism must be emphasized; for even the humblest Christian layman can and must live what, in the modern world, is comparatively an ascetic life. Discipline of the emotions is even rarer, and in the modern world still more difficult, than discipline of the mind; some eminent lay preachers of "discipline" are men who know only the latter. Thought, study, mortification, sacrifice: it is such notions as these that should be impressed upon the young – who differ from the young of other times merely in having a different middle-aged generation behind them.[38] You will never attract the young by making Christianity easy; but a good many can be attracted by finding it difficult: difficult both to the disorderly mind and to the unruly passions.

I refer with some reluctance, but with positive conviction, to the much-discussed Resolution 15 on marriage and birth control.[39] On one part of the problem there is an admirable analytical study by the Master of Corpus in *Theology* for December, 1930.[40] I can only add one suggestion to that statement, without attempting the problems of casuistry which the Master of Corpus discusses with great skill.[41] I feel that the Conference was not only right and courageous to express a view on the subject of procreation radically different from that of Rome; but that the attitude adopted is more important than this particular question, important as it may be, and indicates a radical difference between the Anglican and the Roman views on other matters.[42] I regret, however, that the bishops have placed so much reliance upon the Individual Conscience; and by so doing jeopardized the benefits of their independence. Certainly, anyone who is wholly sincere and pure in heart may seek for guidance from the Holy Spirit; but who of us is always wholly sincere, especially where the most imperative of instincts may be strong enough to simulate to perfection the voice of the Holy Spirit?[43]

The Resolution shows pretty clearly both the strength and the weakness of the Report, and the strength and weakness of the Anglican Church. The recognition of contraception is, I feel sure, something quite different from a concession to "modern" opinion. It was a courageous facing of facts of life; and was the only way of dealing with the question possible within the Anglican organization. But before asserting the distinct character of the Anglican Church in this way, the Bishops must have taken a good deal of thought about it; all the more astonishing that they did not take a little more thought, and not proceed to a statement which seems to me almost suicidal. For to allow that "each couple" [91] should take counsel only *if perplexed in mind* is almost to surrender the whole citadel of the Church. It is ten to one, considering the extreme disingenuity of humanity, which ought to be patent to all after so many thousand years, that only a very small minority will be "perplexed"; and in view of the words of the bishops it is ten to one that the honest minority which takes "competent advice" (and I observe that the order of words is "*medical* and spiritual") [91] will have to appeal to a clergy just as perplexed as itself, or else stung into an obstinacy, greater than that of any Roman clergy, by the futility of this sentence.[44] In short, the whole resolution shows the admirable English devotion to common sense, but also the deplorable Anglican habit of standing things on their heads in the name of common sense. It is exactly this matter of "spiritual advice" which should have been examined and analysed if necessary for years, before making any pronouncement. But the principle is simple, though the successful application might require time. I do not suggest that the full Sacrament of Confession and Penance should be imposed upon every part of the Church; but the Church ought to be able to enjoin upon all its communicants that they should take spiritual advice upon specified problems of life; and both clergy and parishioners should recognize the full seriousness and responsibility of such consultation. I am not unaware that as opinions and theories vary at present, those seeking direction could always find the direction they seek, if they know where to apply; but that is inevitable. But here, if anywhere, is definitely a matter upon which the Individual Conscience is no reliable guide; spiritual guidance should be imperative; and it should be clearly placed above medical advice – where also, opinions and theories vary indefinitely. In short, a general principle of the greatest importance, exceeding the application to this particular issue alone, might have been laid down; and its enunciation was evaded.

To put it frankly, but I hope not offensively, the Roman view in general seems to me to be that a principle must be affirmed without exception; and that thereafter exceptions can be dealt with, without modifying the principle. The view natural to the English mind, I believe, is rather that a principle must be framed in such a way as to include all allowable exceptions. It follows inevitably that the Roman Church must profess to be fixed, while the Anglican Church must profess to take account of changed conditions. I hope that it is unnecessary to give the assurance that I do not consider the Roman way of thought dishonest, and that I would not endorse any cheap and facile gibes about the duplicity and dissimulation of that Church; it is another conception of human nature and of the means by which, on the whole, the greatest number of souls can be saved; but the difference goes deep. *Prudenti dissimulatione uti*[45*] is not a precept which appeals to Anglo-Saxon theology[46†] and here again, the Anglican Church can admit national (I do not mean nationalistic) differences in theory and practice which the more formal organization of Rome cannot recognize. What in England is the right balance between individual liberty and discipline? – between individual responsibility and obedience? – active co-operation and passive reception? And to what extremity are divergences of belief and practice permissible? These are questions which the English mind must always ask; and the answers can only be found, if with hesitation and difficulty, through the English Church. The admission of inconsistencies, sometimes ridiculed as indifference to logic and coherence, of which the English mind is often accused, may be largely the admission of inconsistencies inherent in life itself, and of the impossibility of overcoming them by the imposition of a uniformity greater than life will bear.

Even, however, if the Anglican Church affirmed, as I think it should affirm, the necessity for spiritual direction in admitting the exceptions, the Episcopate still has the responsibility of giving direction to the directors. I cannot but suspect that here the Roman doctrine, so far as I have seen it expounded, leaves us uncertain as does the Anglican. For example: according to the Roman doctrine, which is more commendable – prudent continence in marriage, or unlimited procreation up to the limit of the mother's strength? If the latter, the Church seems to me obliged to offer some solution to the economic questions raised by such practice: for surely, if you lay down a moral law which leads, in practice, to unfortunate social consequences – such as overpopulation or destitution – you make yourself responsible for providing some resolution of these consequences. If the former, what motives are right motives? The latest Papal Encyclical appears to be completely decisive about the question of Resolution 15 – at the cost of solving no individual's problems.[47] And the Resolution is equally, though perhaps no more, unsatisfactory. The Roman statement leaves unanswered the questions: When is it right to limit the family? and: When is it wrong not to limit it? And the Anglican statement leaves unanswered the questions: When is it right to limit the family and right to limit it only by continence? and: When is it right to limit the family by contraception?

On the other hand, the fact that Resolution 15, as I take it, is wrong *primarily* in isolating and treating as independent a question which should be considered as a detail subsumed under the more general question which should have been treated first – that of Spiritual Direction and Authority; this fact does I think indicate one recurrent cause of weakness.[48] When the episcopal mind sees that something is self-evidently desirable in itself, it seems inclined to turn first to consider the means for bringing it into being, rather than to find the theological grounds upon which it can be justified; and there are traces of this zeal here and there in the suggestions towards Reunion and fraternization. For instance (page 117 of the Report), it is suggested that a bishop might authorize and encourage baptised communicant members of churches not in communion with our own, to communicate in his diocese with Anglicans "when the ministrations of their own Church are not available." It is true that this is to be done only under special and temporary local conditions; and it does not form part of my purpose to doubt that under the conditions which the bishops must have had in mind, such intercommunion is most desirable.[49] But what does the suggestion imply? Surely, *if* dissenters should never communicate in Anglican churches, or *if* in certain circumstances they should be encouraged to do so, two very different theories of the Sacrament of the Altar are implied. For the innovation proposed, theological justification is required. What is required is some theory of degrees of reception of the Blessed Sacrament, as well as the validity of the ministration of a celebrant not episcopally ordained. My objection therefore is not to the admission of dissenters to the Altar – and I do not wish to attack what has not yet been defended – but to the propagation of this practice before theological justification has been expounded.[50] Possibly theology is what Bradley said philosophy was: "the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct";[51] I think it may be the finding of good reasons for what we believe upon instinct; but if the Church of England cannot find these reasons, and make them intelligible to the more philosophically trained among the faithful, what can it do?

A similar danger seems to me to inhere in the statement about the Historic Episcopate. Mr. Malcolm Thomson, looking, as I suspect, for the

Roman view, or for one of the tenable Roman views (as an outsider naturally would), and not finding it, extracts and exaggerates one possible perversion;[52] on the other hand he does point to a danger of which we should be aware. He quotes the words of the Report:

> while we thus stand for the Historic Episcopate as a necessary element in any union in which the Anglican Communion can take part . . . we do not require of others acceptance of those reasons, or of any one particular theory or interpretation of the Episcopate as a condition of reunion. [119]

What the bishops had in mind in committing themselves to this serious statement, I am sure, is the fact that the Church has never held one rigid theory of the nature of the Episcopate. Even in the Roman Church I understand that there are still at least two theories tenable. But such theological subtleties pass beyond the ordinary lay mind; and the greatest value of Mr. Thomson's interesting pamphlet, to me, is its exposure of the possibilities of misunderstanding in the wording of some of the Report.[53] And I agree with him to this extent, that the words *we do not require of others acceptance of those reasons* might be taken to mean "we do not require of others acceptance of any reasons except expediency": in other words, we beg that Nonconformists should accept the Episcopate as a harmless formality, for the sake of a phantom unity.[54]

I do not imagine for a moment that the "conversations" of the Church of England with the Free Churches will bear any fruit whatever in our time; and I rather hope they will not; for any fruit of this harvest would be unripe and bitter fruit, untimely nipped.[55] But at the same time I cannot cat-call with those who accuse the Church of facing-both-ways, and making one profession to the innocent Levantines and Swedes, and another to the implacable Methodists.[56] It would be very poor statesmanship indeed to envisage any reunion which should not fall ultimately within a scheme for complete reunion; and, in spite of mirth, "reunion all round" is the only ideal tenable.[57] To the Methodists, certainly, the Church of England owes a heavy responsibility, somewhat similar to that of the Church of Rome towards ourselves; and it would be almost effrontery for Anglican bishops to seek an alliance with Upsala and Constantinople[58] without seeking some way of repatriating those descended from men who would (I am sure) never have left the Church of England had it been in the eighteenth century what it is now in the second quarter of the twentieth. In such difficult negotiations the Church is quite properly and conscientiously facing-both-ways: which only goes to show that the Church of England is at the present juncture the one church upon which the duty of working towards reunion most devolves. There are possible risks, which have been seized upon as actualities when they have been merely potentialities; the risk of feeling more orthodox when transacting with the Eastern and Baltic Churches, and more Evangelical when transacting with the Nonconformists. But I do not believe that the bishops have, according to the Report, conceded to the Nonconformists in England anything that the Eastern authorities could reasonably abhor.[59] On the contrary, the attitude of eminent dissenters, in their objections still more than in their approval, seems to me to indicate that the bishops have stopped at the right point. The points of difference with the other orthodox churches are simple and direct, and in a near way of being settled. It is easier to agree with a man who differs from you in blood but less in faith, than to agree with one who is of your own blood but has different ideas: because the irrelevant differences between those of the same blood are less superable than the relevant differences between those of different blood.[60] The problems of dissent between Anglicans and Free Churchmen are (we might just as well admit it) much more complicated than the problems between the Anglicans and the Swedish. Our doctrinal difficulties with Free Churchmen are complicated by divisions social, local and political; by traditions of prejudice on both sides; and it is likely that several generations must pass before the problems of theology and hierarchy can be fairly detached and faced. The Lambeth Conference of 1930 has accomplished in this direction this much: that it has determined the limits beyond which the Church cannot go in commending itself to Free Churchmen; further concession would be abandonment of the Church itself, and mere incorporation, as possibly the most important member, in a loose federation of autonomous sects without stability and without significance.

The actuality of the approximation towards intercommunion with the Eastern Churches, however, has very much more than picturesque value. It brings with it the hope of a greater stability, instead of the old stability, real or apparent, which seemed to characterize an Establishment. On matters of doctrine, the summary of discussions between Anglican bishops and orthodox representatives (page 138 ff.) is of great importance, especially paragraph 11:[61]

> It was stated by the Anglican Bishops that in the Sacrament of the Eucharist "the Body and Blood of Christ are verily and indeed taken and

> received by the faithful in the Lord's Supper," and that "the Body of Christ is given, taken and eaten in the Supper only after an heavenly and spiritual manner," and that after Communion the consecrated elements remaining are regarded sacramentally as the Body and Blood of Christ; further, that the Anglican Church teaches the doctrine of Eucharistic sacrifice as explained in the Answer of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York to Pope Leo XIII on Anglican Ordinations; and also that in the offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice the Anglican Church prays that "by the merits and death of Thy Son Jesus Christ, and through faith in His blood, we and all Thy whole Church may obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His passion," as including the whole company of faithful people, living and departed. [139]

Reunion with the East is of the greatest significance for a Church the position of which in the national life is inevitably changing. We still think, and rightly, of the Church of England as the "National Church"; but the word *national* in this context can no longer mean what it once meant. I entirely sympathize with Mr. Malcolm Thomson, and with any other Scot, Irishman or Methodist, in his objection to the vapid phrase about St. Paul's, "the parish church of the British Empire" [20].[62] An "imperial" Church, perhaps under the patronage of the four evangelists of imperialism, Lords Rothermere, Beaverbrook, Riddell and Camrose, would be something more odious, because far more vulgar, than the Erastian Church of the eighteenth century.[63] I prefer to think of the Church as what I believe it is more and more coming to be, not the "English Church," but national as "the Catholic Church in England."

For the last three hundred years the relation of Church to State has been constantly undergoing change. I do not propose in this essay to enter upon the difficult question of Disestablishment.[64] I am not here concerned with the practical difficulties and anomalies which have made the problem of Church and State more acute in the last few years;[65] I am not concerned with prognosticating their future relations, or with offering any facile solution for so complex a problem, or with discussing the future discipline within the Church itself. I wish to say nothing about Disestablishment, first because I have not made up my own mind, and second because it does not seem to me fitting at this time that one layman, with no special erudition in that subject, should publicly express his views. I am considering only the political and social changes within the last three hundred years.

A National Church in the early Caroline sense depended upon the precarious harmony of the King, a strong Archbishop and a strong First Minister; and perhaps the Laudian Church came just too late to be more for us than the type of one form of order. The political-social Erastianism of the eighteenth century has gone its way too; there can be no more Hoadleys; there is not much financial or social advantage in holy orders; nowadays the smaller folk, who seek security, find their way if they can into the Civil Service, and the larger and more predatory seek success in the City.[66] Less and less is there any reason for taking orders, but just vocation. I suspect that the rule by Prime Ministers is dwindling, too: no possible Prime Minister (except perhaps Lord Rothermere's sometime nominee, Lord Brentford, which God forfend)[67] would now, I trust, venture to impose his own choice upon the Church in the way of episcopal preferment, or would do anything except consult the safest authorities. And the House of Commons, which has seemed to cling to the Church as the last reality in England over which it has any control, must eventually relinquish that tardy shadow of power too. The only powers left are those with which we must all reckon, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Bank of England.

Whether established or disestablished, the Church of England can never be reduced to the condition of a Sect, unless by some irrational act of suicide; even in the sense in which, with all due respect, the Roman Church is in England a sect. It is easier for the Church of England to become Catholic, than for the Church of Rome in England to become English; and if the Church of England was mutilated by separation from Rome, the Church of Rome was mutilated by separation from England. If England is ever to be in any appreciable degree converted to Christianity, it can only be through the Church of England.

To revert to the sense of the first paragraph of this essay, the Church of England may easily be made to appear in a better way, or in a worse way, than she is. The sudden heat of the Prayer Book controversy, the vivaciousness of Lord Brentford and Lord Cushendun, the "brawl" at St. Paul's, the unpleasantness in the diocese of Birmingham, the awareness of the Press that there is sometimes good copy in ecclesiastical affairs, the journalism of Dean Inge, and the large sales of popular theological literature; all these things together would seem to suggest that never was there such a lively interest in the Church as to-day.[68] And the same dissensions, when interpreted to mean that opinion in the Church is divided to the point of disruption; the lack of ordinands and lack of funds, the anomalous and often humiliating relation of Church to State, the insurrection of what is popularly called the new morality, and the patent fact that the majority of Englishmen and women are wholly indifferent to the obligations of their faith, even when they have not quite repudiated it: such signs may seem to point towards collapse or superannuation.[69]

I take such phenomena to be, for the most part, merely symptoms of the changing place, not only of the Anglican Church in the State, but of the Universal Church in the World. As I have said already, the Church of England can no longer be, and must no longer be, a National Church in the old nationalistic or in the old Erastian way. The high power it may seem to have lost was either a bad power, or an obsolete power, or the shadow of a power. The political pressure from without, a force of cohesion in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, no longer exists except as the spectral dread of Popery; the fear of the social consequences of disruption within no longer exists, for the disruption and secession have long since taken place, and the dread has been succeeded by the faint hope of reconstruction. The problem of the relation of Church and State – and I am not thinking here only of the Anglican Church, but of any body of believers in any country, and of the manifold and perplexing problems of the Holy See – is as acute as ever it was; but it takes ever new forms. I believe that in spite of the apparently insoluble problems with which it has to deal, the Church of England is strengthening its position as a branch of the Catholic Church, the Catholic Church in England. I am not thinking of the deliberate struggles of one party within the Church, but of an inevitable course of events which has not been directed by human hands.

At this point I must turn aside for a moment to protest against certain assumptions of Mr. Malcolm Thomson which are not peculiar to himself, but are probably shared by most of those who are only interested in church affairs as they read of them in the newspapers. When Mr. Thomson wrote his spirited pamphlet *Will the Scottish Church Survive?*[70]* he was full of praise for the animation manifested in the English Church in the dissensions of Catholics, Evangelicals and Modernists. He may have slightly caricatured these differences for the sake of picturesqueness, if only as a stick to beat his Presbyterian victim. I think that his chief error in treating the Lambeth Conference is that he discusses the Report without reference to the history and development of the English Church, and treats it as if it were the creation of one individual intelligence, instead of considering what must be the composite production of three hundred minds. But on some matters he not only lacks perspective, but is definitely misleading. Mr. Thomson is a metaphor-addict, and his mind is ridden by images of underground passages (very short ones), ferries, wherries, and other figures of easy transport from Canterbury to Rome.[71] He remarks for instance:

> And the careers of several prominent Anglo-Catholics served to strengthen the general suspicion. For they had a habit of using the Church of England as a junction and not as a terminus. [28]

I cannot see how *several* can form a habit; unless Mr. Thomson wishes to suggest that Father Knox and Father Vernon have formed the "habit" of leaving the English Church.[72] I should like to know the names of the "few well-known authors" [27] who have been converted: I doubt whether Mr. Thomson's list would contain many names that I do not know – one or two of his converts may even have started life as Presbyterians; and by the sum of the names which I know, I am not greatly impressed. And here again, I suspect that more capital is made of the transit of an Anglo-Catholic to Rome, than of that of a plain Low Churchman. For some souls, I admit, there is no satisfaction outside of Rome; and if Anglo-Catholicism has helped a few such to find their way to where they belong, I am very glad; but if Anglo-Catholicism has assisted a few persons to leave the Church of England who could never have rested in that uneasy bed anyway, on the other hand it has helped many more, I believe – one cannot quote statistics in the negative – to remain within the Anglican Church. Why, for instance, has Lord Halifax not saved himself a deal of trouble, of generous toil and disappointment, by becoming a convert out of hand?[73] And why are not Lord Brentford and Lord Cushendun taken by the neck and dropped respectively into Methodism and Presbyterianism?[74] The Anglican Church is supposed to be divided, by newspaper verdict, either into Catholics and Modernists, or into Catholics and Evangelicals, or sometimes into Catholics, Modernists *and* Evangelicals.[75] If the divisions were so clear as all that, there might be something to be said for a voluntary liquidation. To those for whom the English Church means Lord Brentford, the Bishop of Birmingham and *The Church Times*, it may well seem that nothing keeps it together but inertia, and the unwillingness, for various motives, to scrap an extensive plant of machinery.[76]

To detached observers like Mr. Malcolm Thomson, entering England from the comparative calm of Edinburgh, Lhassa or Rome, the disorder of the Church of England may seem fatal.[77] When clergymen hasten to reply with severity if a Bishop writes a letter to *The Times*[78]* and when even plain people like myself can make use of such eminences as Lord Brentford and the Bishop of Birmingham for comic relief,[79]* there is at least the opportunity for misunderstanding. For such freedom of speech and such diversity of opinion there is, however, something to be said: within limits – which, I grant, have been transgressed; but what matters is not so much uniformity of liturgy as fixity of dogma. There are, of course, differences of opinion which are fundamental and permanent; but I am not at all sure that it is not a very good thing for the intellectual life of the Church that there should be. When they come to light in the public press, they usually appear to be the clear and irreconcilable views of two or more well-regimented and hostile forces. But in practice, each division is itself divided, and the lines of sectional division are far from clear. You cannot point to one group of "Modernists": there are Catholics who may be called modernist, and Evangelicals who may call themselves modernist, as well as a few persons in whom Modernism seems to signify merely confused thinking. I have known Evangelicals to whom the name of Dr. Barnes was more displeasing than that of Lord Halifax. There are persons who do not *always* agree with the Editor of *The Church Times*; and I sometimes am moved to admire an article in *The Modern Churchman*.[80] To a large degree accordingly the differences within the Church are healthy differences within a living body, and to the same degree their existence qualifies the Church of England for assuming the initiative toward Reunion.

And the Conference of 1930 has marked an important stage in that direction. It has affirmed, beyond previous conferences, the Catholicity of the Church; and in spite of defects and dubious statements in detail, the Report will have strengthened the Church both within and without. It has made clearer the limits beyond which the Church cannot go towards meeting Nonconformity, and the extent to which it is prepared to go to meet the Eastern and Baltic Churches. This advance is of no small importance in a world which will obviously divide itself more and more sharply into Christians and non-Christians. The Universal Church is to-day, it seems to me, more definitely set against the World than at any time since pagan Rome. I do not mean that our times are particularly corrupt; all times are corrupt. I mean that Christianity, in spite of certain local appearances, is not, and cannot be within measureable time, "official." The World is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality.[81] The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time: so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the World from suicide.[82]

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; first published on 5 Mar 1931 as *Thoughts after Lambeth*, "Criterion Miscellany" – No. 30 (London: Faber, 1931). Pp. 32. On 10 Nov 1930, TSE wrote to the Rev. Charles Harris on the subject of the failings of George Thomson's recent Criterion Miscellany pamphlet on the 1930 Lambeth Conference, asking: "who would be the best person to write another pamphlet. I would be prepared to put other work aside and write one myself if I felt that I was quite competent; furthermore, it does not seem quite correct to encourage a man to write an essay, publish it, and then turn round and censure it" (*L5* 378-79). On 25 Nov, TSE told Harris that his own pamphlet was under way and was "to appear as a personal and independent expression of view, and not as a perfunctory or 'framed' rejoinder to Thomson" (*L5* 403-04). On 9 Dec, TSE wrote to Canon E. G. Selwyn, editor of *Theology* (then publishing a series of essays on the Lambeth Report), promising to send his draft: "What I need is criticism (1) on right and wrong interpretations (2) on omissions, and on commissions both of error and of bad taste . . . My point of view is naturally much more difficult to express nicely than is that of an irresponsible outsider. I must make the thing a little personal, both for persuasiveness, and partly to talk about some matters on which I feel confidence and partly to deal a few blows to my pet enemies and partly not to appear merely defending the Church to order" (*L5* 421). On 30 Jan 1931, TSE told Rev. Harris: "This confounded Lambeth Conference paper has absorbed all of my spare time; I have very little to show for it and what I have done I am anything but satisfied with," but on 6 Feb, TSE informed his brother, Henry, that his Lambeth pamphlet was "about finished," adding that he "had to spend a lot of time consulting bishops and others" (*L5* 479). TSE sent his draft to Selwyn, Harris, Bishop George Bell, Canon Francis Underhill, and the Archbishop of York, William Temple, for their comments.

2. *The Lambeth Conference, 1930: Encyclical Letter from the Bishops, with Resolutions and Reports* (London: S.P.C.K., 1930). The seventh Lambeth Conference held at Lambeth Palace, under the presidency of Cosmo Gordon Lang, Archbishop of Canterbury, ran for six weeks between 4 July and 9 Aug 1930 and was attended by 307 bishops of the worldwide Anglican Communion.

3. Previous Lambeth Conferences published reports in 1867, 1878, 1888, 1897, 1908, and 1920. TSE consulted the 1920 Report before writing *Thoughts after Lambeth*.

4. A Papal Encyclical is a letter issued by the Pope, usually treating some aspect of Catholic doctrine and addressed to the Catholic bishops.

5*. TSE's note: "*The Lambeth Conference*. By George Malcolm Thomson. Criterion Miscellany." Published in 1930 by Faber as No. 24 in the Criterion Miscellany series. TSE commissioned Thomson's pamphlet and saw it through the press. The blurb says that it "presents an outside criticism, with crisp comment, on the Report of the Lambeth Conference." On 25 Nov, TSE complained to Bishop Bell about Thomson's "rather vulgar smartness of manner" (*L5* 405) and again on 9 Dec to Canon Selwyn of "a slightly offensive and smart cheapness in his pamphlet and of course considerable misunderstanding" (*L5* 421).

6. *Trans*: "concerning faith and morals"

7. Thomson comments on "a certain woolliness of outline discernible in the diction of the three hundred and seven Bishops" (6). In particular, Thomson criticizes the Report's resolutions on marriage and sex as an "impressive demonstration of forcible-feeble thinking and cloudy expression" (13) while the "thirteen pages of the youth section" are dismissed as "a compound of vague platitudes, wearisome generalizations, and pious hopes" (18).

8. Convocation is a synodical assembly of the Church of England consisting of an upper house for bishops and a lower house for clergy. In 1920, the national Church Assembly was established with the power to legislate for the Church of England (it was renamed and reconstituted in 1970 as the General Synod). Lambeth Conferences are not ecclesiastical synods and have no legislative or judicial powers.

9. Sir James Jeans (1877-1946), mathematician and astronomer, author of the best seller *The Mysterious Universe* (Cambridge UP, 1930), in which he concludes: "the Great Architect of the Universe now begins to appear as a pure mathematician" (122). On 28 Nov 1930, TSE told the Archbishop of York: "I am sorry that even indirect approval should be given to such well-meaning but dangerous people as Eddington and Jeans" (*L5* 413), later complaining to Lord Halifax on 5 Apr 1931 of "the doctrine-less religiosity of Eddington and Jeans" (*L5* 533)

In spite of Herbert Read's advocacy of the value of the "new psychology" for literary critics in his *Criterion* article "Psycho-Analysis and the Critics" (Jan 1925, 214-30), TSE was deeply sceptical of the works of Freud; of the Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung (1875-1961), founder of analytical psychology; and of the Austrian psychologist Alfred Adler (1870-1937), founder of individual psychology. TSE was introduced to the sermons of Rev. William James Potter (1830-93), a founder of the Free Religious Association, by Potter's grandson Conrad Aiken.

10. The Lambeth Report committee on "The Christian Doctrine of God" examines Christianity in relation to modern currents in scientific and philosophical thought; to non-Christian religions and ideals; and the realization of Christian doctrine through teaching, study, and worship.

11. Thomson observes: "in the section 'Youth and its Vocation,' the bishops show that they know all the rules of contemporary popular journalism" (15). On 25 Nov 1930, TSE told Bishop Bell: "I was particularly relieved to have your comment on the Youth section; because on this point I almost primed him [Thomson], though I take no responsibility for the way he said it" (*L5* 405).

12. Thomson calls this sentence in the Report "the purest drivel" (16).

13. The bishops allude to James Montgomery's popular hymn "For Ever with the Lord," which contains the lines: "Yet nightly pitch my moving tent / A day's march nearer home." *The Parish Church Hymnal: Part 1. Morning and Evening*, ed. R. M. Taylor (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1891), 110. The committee on "Youth and its Vocation" was made up of fifty bishops under the chairmanship of the Bishop of London.

14. Fleet Street (OED): "a street in London devoted largely to the production and publication of daily newspapers and periodical journals; hence *allusively*, the national newspapers generally, the journalistic press, journalism."

15. TSE refers to the censorship in the United Kingdom of James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and D. H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928).

16*. TSE's note: "Some time ago, during the consulship of Lord Brentford, I suggested that if we were to have a Censorship at all, it ought to be at Lambeth Palace; but I suppose that the few persons who read my words thought that I was trying to be witty." In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Oct 1929, TSE challenges the former Conservative Home Secretary Viscount Brentford's article, *"'Censorship' of Books"* (1929): "Has he, in his busy life, ever had time to think deeply about the relation of art and morals, and morals and religion? Some men have found these problems so difficult that they have had no time for anything else" (3.748).

17. tomtit (OED): "a common name of the Blue Titmouse (*Parus caeruleus*)."

18. In Feb 1930, TSE unsuccessfully attempted to commission an essay from Aldous Huxley for the Criterion Miscellany series: "We thought that a pamphlet by you on the problem of Good and Evil in the modern world would have a great success and be extremely valuable as a document of our time. I mean a general statement of the problem of conduct, individual and social from a modern point of view such as yours. It would really be a concise statement of the point of view and the preoccupation with moral problems which is so strong in all your work but which a great many people are inclined to misunderstand. I mean that your name is being used every day as a symbol of a point of view and I am sure that half the time it is used quite mistakenly." On 8 Oct 1930, TSE told Desmond MacCarthy: "The only point I have to make about Huxley is that this sort of intellectual curiosity without any serious effort to decide what is worth while being curious about fails altogether to interest me; and the Huxley point of view seems to me in the end to be merely callow. I feel that Aldous is lacking in some element essential to a mature mind" (*L5* 336).

19. TSE criticizes Russell's popular self-help guide *The Conquest of Happiness* (1930) in his "Commentary" for the *Criterion* of Jan 1931 (4.218).

20. The Lambeth Report comments: "significant is the increasing consciousness of thoughtful men and women that the emancipations which they have lately won do not yield deep or lasting satisfactions" (18).

21. In *The Conquest of Happiness*, Russell contends: "While it is desirable that the old should treat with respect the wishes of the young, it is not desirable that the young should treat with respect the wishes of the old" (134).

22. TSE refers to I. A. Richards's review of *Poems, 1909-1925* in which *The Waste Land* is said to express the "plight of a whole generation." "Mr. Eliot's Poems," *New Statesman*, 26 (20 Feb 1926), 584-85.

23. The anonymous *TLS* reviewer, Geoffrey West, complains that "it is our view that by accepting a higher spiritual authority based not upon the deepest personal experience (for that we must still turn to the poems), but upon the anterior and exterior authority of revealed religion, he [TSE] has abdicated from his high position." "Mr. Eliot's New Essays," *TLS*, 1401 (6 Dec 1928), 953.

24. TSE alludes to Robert Browning's poem "The Lost Leader" (1845), which is critical of William Wordsworth's disavowal of political liberalism and acceptance of the office of poet laureate.

25*. TSE's note: "*i.e.*, in 1931."

26. Murry, "Essays on Modern Religion," *Adelphi*, 1 (Dec 1930), 191. In "T. S. Eliot at Lambeth," Murry responded to *Thoughts after Lambeth* as "a study in local politics in which I cannot be interested. I am amused by his witticisms at the expense of other people, and intrigued by those aimed – and perhaps well-aimed – at myself; but the substance of the pamphlet leaves me cold." *Adelphi*, 2 (Apr 1931), 70.

27. fugleman (OED): "a soldier especially expert and well drilled, formerly placed in front of a regiment or company as an example or model to the others in their exercises."

28. "Humanism and Religion," *Criterion*, 9 (Oct 1929), 26.

29. Foerster advances the opinion that "in its insistence on conversion (by right habit), on the exertion of the ethical will (to which, not to reason, it finally assigns supremacy), on the high function of imagination, on the need of meditation, on the need, above all, of humility, and in its offering of substantial happiness (at its best, an exalted peace) as the fruit of right living, humanism would seem to include all that is essential in religion" (26-27).

30. TSE responds to Thomson's quip that Anglicans are in no danger of "religion entering their church" (32).

31. battue (OED): "the driving of game from cover (by beating the bushes, etc. in which they lodge) to a point where a number of sportsmen wait to shoot them."

32. In "Marie Lloyd" (1922), TSE refers to *Essays on Depopulation in Melanesia* (1922) in which the anthropologist W. H. R. Rivers ascribes the rapid decline of population in the South Pacific archipelago to the deleterious effects of modern civilization (2:420).

33. *Read*: "Let us leave the heavens / To the angels and the sparrows." *The Future of an Illusion*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth Press, 1927), 87. Freud quotes from Heinrich Heine's poem "Deutschland. Ein Wintermärchen" [Germany: A Winter's Tale]. TSE criticizes Julian Huxley's Conway Memorial Lecture, *Science, Religion, and Human Nature* (1930), in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Jan 1931, observing: "To the hereditary solemnities of Mr. Julian Huxley I much prefer the innocent pranks of Dr. Freud" (4.217).

34. "Some Thoughts on Process and Reality," *Theology*, 21 (Aug 1930), 66-79. Taylor remarks of Whitehead's 1927-28 Gifford Lectures, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology* (1929): "He is reasserting the doctrine of Augustine and Christianized Platonism in general, that the 'archetypal ideas' of creation are eternally contained in the 'Word' which was in the beginning with God, and is God" (77).

The philosopher A. E. Taylor (1869-1945), Professor at the University of Edinburgh, was the author of *The Faith of a Moralist* (1930), his Gifford Lectures of 1926-28. In Feb 1926, TSE wrote to Taylor to solicit a contribution to the *Criterion* and again on 1 Jan 1930 informing the Anglo-Catholic Taylor that: "Your attitude on theological matters is so close to my own that it would be also a personal pleasure to me" (*L5* 4). TSE told Rev. William Force Stead on 3 Feb that "I have already got into touch with A. E. Taylor on account of a German book on which I wanted his opinion with a view to publication. I have not yet seen him but found him extremely amicable in correspondence and I have suggested a piece of work which he may be willing to do at some time" (*L5* 75-76). To TSE's disappointment, Taylor did not contribute to the *Criterion*.

35. TSE read J. W. N. Sullivan's regular column expounding the "new physics" in the *Athenaeum* during John Middleton Murry's editorship (1919-21). Sullivan's interviews with contemporary scientists were published in the *Observer* newspaper during 1930-31.

In 1926, the Austrian physicist Erwin Schrödinger proposed a theory that described the atom in terms of waves of probability. In 1931, TSE wrote to Planck to seek rights to publish his essay against scientific positivism, *Positivismus und reale Aussenwelt* [*Positivism and the Real External World*] in the Criterion Miscellany pamphlet series (*L5* 694); although it did not appear, Planck contributed an introduction to Faber's 1936 translation of Ernst Zimmer's *The Revolution in Physics*.

36. Following their meeting at the Lambeth Conference, TSE wrote to the Bishop of Durham, H. Hensley Henson, on 11 May 1932 to solicit a critique, from the position of orthodoxy, of Wells's *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1931).

37*. TSE's note: "Under the heading *Nature of Space: Professor Einstein's Change of Mind*, I read in *The Times* of February 6th, 1931, the following news from New York: 'At the close of a 90-minute talk on his unified field theory to a group of physicists and astronomers in the Carnegie Institution at Pasadena yesterday, Professor Einstein startled his hearers by smilingly declaring, 'Space can never be anything similar to the old symmetrical spherical space theory.'

That theory, he said, was not possible under the new equations. Thus he swept aside both his own former hypothesis that the universe and the space it occupied were both static and uniform, and the concept of his friend the Dutch astronomer, De Sitter, that though the universe was static it was non-uniform, which De Sitter had based upon the hypothesis that instead of matter determining space it was space that determined matter, and hence also the size of the universe.

Astronomers who heard Professor Einstein make his declaration said it was an indication that he had accepted the work of two American scientists, Dr. Edwin P. Hubble, an astronomer in the Mount Wilson Observatory, and Dr. Richard C. Hace Tollman [*sic*], a physicist of the California Institute of Technology, who hold that the universe is non-static, although uniformly distributed in space. In the belief of Dr. Hubble and Dr. Tollman the universe is constantly expanding and matter is constantly being converted into energy' [13]. Our next revelation about the attitude of Science to Religion, will issue, I trust, from Dr. Hubble and Dr. Tollman."

Willem de Sitter (1872-1934), Dutch mathematician, physicist and astronomer. Edwin P. Hubble (1889-1953), American astronomer, who in 1929 formulated the theory of the metric expansion of space, the basis of the theory of the expanding universe. Richard C. Tolman (1881-1948), American mathematical physicist who made an important contribution to theoretical cosmology.

38. On 18 Mar 1932, Stephen Spender wrote to TSE to express his disagreement with *Thoughts after Lambeth*: "The point is that all the words you use 'chastity, humility, austerity, discipline,' convey to me (and hundreds of other people like me, I think) the feeling of staying in a cold schoolroom-chapel unheated by a metal stove and doing nothing but be as consciously miserable as possible."

39. Resolution 15 reads in its entirety: "Where there is a clearly felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, the method must be decided on Christian principles. The primary and obvious method is complete abstinence from intercourse (as far as may be necessary) in a life of discipline and self-control lived in the power of the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless in those cases where there is such a clearly-felt moral obligation to limit or avoid parenthood, and where there is a morally sound reason for avoiding complete abstinence, the Conference agrees that other methods may be used, provided that this is done in the light of the same Christian principles. The Conference records its strong condemnation of the use of any methods of contraception-control from motives of selfishness, luxury, or mere convenience" (43-44). This resolution was vigorously debated by the committee on "The Life and Witness of the Christian Community" and only passed by the full conference following amendments by a majority of 193 votes to 67. Resolution 15 excited widespread controversy in daily and Sunday newspapers in the UK.

40. Will Spens, "Lambeth Conference Reviews: II. (a) and (b). – The Life and Witness of the Christian Community: Marriage and Sex," *Theology*, 21 (Dec 1930), 336-50. Will Spens (1882-1962), since 1927 master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, was a liberal Anglo-Catholic who contributed an essay, "The Eucharist," to *Essays Catholic and Critical* (1926). TSE first met Spens on a visit to Corpus Christi in Oct 1927 and sent him a copy of *Thoughts after Lambeth*.

41. Spens comments: "the main difficulty in discussing this issue lies in the difficulty of disentangling from vehement denunciation of the use of contraceptives the reasons which are held to justify the distinction which is thus drawn between the use of contraceptives and the deliberate confining of intercourse to the 'safe period'" (342).

42. The Lambeth Report observes: "It must be recognised that there is in the Catholic Church a very strong tradition that the use of preventive methods is in all cases unlawful for a Christian" (90). The Roman Catholic Church teaches that contraceptives are contrary to the natural law. The Sacred Penitentiary (10 Mar 1884) says that *regulariter* confessors are bound to question penitents whom they suspect of contraceptive practices.

43. On the subject of birth control, the Lambeth Report counsels: "There are certain principles which must always be axiomatic for Christians. These principles are to be discerned in loyalty to Christ, and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, whose strength is sufficient for all human needs" (90). On 28 Nov 1930, TSE discussed Resolution 15 with the Archbishop of York: "I do feel very glad that the Conference courageously took a different view from that of the Roman Church, and the only sentence that I deplore is the recommendation to the exercise of private judgment. It seems to me to be one of the matters in which ordinary lay people may easily deceive [themselves] into fancying that they are being guided by the Holy Spirit, when they are guided by their own inclinations; and I could have wished that they were recommended more strongly to seek spiritual counsel" (*L5* 412).

44. The full sentence reads: "Each couple must decide for themselves, as in the sight of God, after the most careful and conscientious thought, and, if perplexed in mind, after taking competent advice, both medical and spiritual" (91).

45*. TSE's note: "See *Theology*, December, 1930, p. 307. It has been pointed out to me that here *dissimulatio* should perhaps be translated as 'tactfulness' rather than 'dissimulation'; but a tactfulness which consists primarily in not asking awkward questions seems to me to be pretty close to simulation and dissimulation." Canon Selwyn's Dec 1930 editorial in *Theology* quotes a passage from Edward Génicot's *Theologiae moralis institutiones* (1896-97), in which the Belgian Jesuit expresses the view that a confessor, faced with practising Christians who have not renounced contraception, "prudenti dissimulatione uti posse" [can use a prudent dissimulation] (ed. J. Salsmans. 6th ed. Brussels: Dewit, 1909, vol 2, 568).

46†. In *Thoughts after Lambeth*: "to the Anglo-Saxon mind"

47. *Casti connubii* ("of chaste wedlock") was a papal encyclical promulgated by Pope Pius XI on 31 Dec 1930 in response to Resolution 15 of the Lambeth Report. It stresses the sanctity of marriage, prohibits Catholics from using any form of artificial birth control, and reaffirms the prohibition on abortion.

48. In a letter to Bishop Bell dated 25 Nov 1930, TSE explained: "As for the Sex Resolution, my own view is very simple: I welcome the independence of the Bishops in not slavishly following Rome, and I only regret the insertion of the clause allowing private judgement: it seems to me to be distinctly the place for insisting that the laity should take spiritual counsel and

direction – and incidentally for gradually making the parish clergy prepare themselves for being able to give (perhaps with the collaboration of medical men) wise direction" (*L5* 405-06).

49. The Lambeth Report supports the discretion of bishops to sanction Anglicans receiving Holy Communion from ministers not in communion with the Anglican Church: "where the ministrations of his own Church are not available for long periods of time or without travelling great distances" (117).

50. On 7 Jan 1931, TSE complained to Bishop Bell: "I wonder if I am wrong in feeling (as a result of poring over Lambeth) that the Anglican Church is a little too ready to approve practices which are worthy of approval and find the theological justifications afterwards? I mean that the English mind, when it sees that something ought to be done or to be tolerated, immediately does it or tolerates it, on instinct. I am thinking of that difficult matter of mixed communions, which does seem to me to depend upon some clear doctrine about the Sacrament of the Altar which has not yet been formulated" (*L5* 457-58).

51. "metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct; but to find these reasons is no less an instinct." *Appearance and Reality* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1908), xiv.

52. Thomson asserts: "The difference between an Episcopal church claiming Apostolic succession in the usually accepted sense and, say, a Presbyterian Church, is not the difference between two fads about running churches; it goes right down to the roots of what each church believes. How there could be a real union between such churches unless one of them admits that it has erred is hardly obvious" (25).

53. On 9 Dec 1930, TSE told Canon Selwyn that his comment "on the Episcopate is based on some notes given me by the Archbishop of York, but as I was unable quite to agree so far as I could understand him, I feel very uncertain about it" (*L5* 421).

54. Thomson observes caustically: "the Anglicans will unite with the Presbyterians or the Wesleyans if they will give an entirely meaningless title to men whom they will believe to be bishops to precisely the same degree as members of the Ku Klux Klan believe their Supreme Grand Wizard to be in fact a necromancer" (25).

55. The Lambeth Conference welcomed the Delegation of the Federal Council of Evangelical Free Churches but their discussions achieved little progress toward reunion.

56. Thomson says that the Church of England "cannot succeed *both* with the Orthodox and the Methodists" (29).

57. *Reunion All Round: Being a Plea for the Inclusion within the Church of England of All Mahometans, Jews and Atheists* (1914) was the facetious title of a pamphlet by Ronald Knox. The 1920 Lambeth Report issued "An Appeal to All Christian People" as a step toward reunion with episcopal and non-episcopal churches.

58. The Archbishop of Upsala (also Uppsala) is the head of the Church of Sweden; the Patriarch of Constantinople, known as the Ecumenical Patriarch, is *primus inter pares* (first among equals) in the Eastern Orthodox communion.

59. TSE contradicts Thomson's assertion: "Every step towards the Nonconformists is a step away from Constantinople" (26).

60. Thomson contends: "It is obvious that there is more in common, in a general sort of way, between the average Anglican and the average Nonconformist, than there is between either and the average Orthodox communicant" (26).

61. The Lambeth Report contains "A Résumé of the Discussions July 15th – 18th, 1930 between the Patriarch of Alexandria with the Other Orthodox Representatives and Bishops of the Anglican Communion at Lambeth Palace" (138-40).

62. Thomson objects to the references to St. Paul's Cathedral in the *Times* on 16 July 1930 (14) and again on 19 July (15) as the "Parish Church of the Empire," arguing: "There is indeed a danger that the Anglican Communion may sink into becoming merely the Church of the British Empire, a national church on a large scale existing where the map is painted red" (20).

63. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Jan 1930, TSE expresses his disapproval of the crusade for Empire Free Trade headed by the newspaper barons Lord Beaverbrook and Lord Rothermere (4.4). George Riddell, Baron Riddell (1865-1934) was proprietor of the *News of the World* and William Berry, first viscount Camrose (1879-1954), was the proprietor of several newspapers, including the *Daily Telegraph* and the *Financial Times*.

64. Disestablishment of the Church of England, a live political issue throughout the nineteenth century, especially in the 1870s and 1880s, was generally less contentious in the twentieth century, although recently proposed by the Bishop of Durham, H. Hensley Henson, in *Disestablishment* (1929).

65. Notably, the decision of the House of Commons to reject the revised Prayer Book in 1927-28. The Convocation of the Church of England illegally authorized use of the revised Prayer Book during the dispute. TSE discusses the controversy in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Dec 1927 (3.293).

66. On 28 Nov 1930, TSE explained to the Archbishop of York that Thomson did not understand the history of the Church of England: "I think that my own attempt at rectification will take the form of pointing out that the Anglican Church, gradually ceasing to be a National Church either in the good sense of Laud, or the bad sense of the eighteenth century and Hoadly, has been slowly establishing a much better position as part of the whole Catholic Church" (*L5* 412). In common with many contemporary Anglo-Catholics, TSE admired the seventeenth-century Laudian Church. In "Augustan Age Tories" (1928), TSE praises an essay on the Bishop of Winchester, Benjamin Hoadly (also known as Hoadley) (3.510).

67. TSE's disquiet is partly because Viscount Brentford was a fervent evangelical Low Churchman extremely hostile to the Anglo-Catholic element within the Church of England.

68. Thomson's pamphlet refers to the rejection of "the new Prayer Book" in the House of Commons following passionate speeches from Lord Brentford and the Ulster Unionist politician Ronald McNeill, Baron Cushendun (1861-1934); Thomson also refers to "the activities of Barnes-stormers of Birmingham, and other queer chapters in the ecclesiastical history of our times" (29), satirizing E. W. Barnes, Bishop of Birmingham. Barnes was a notorious opponent of what he considered to be the superstitions of Anglo-Catholicism. His speech at the Lambeth Conference in favor of female bishops moved the Bishop of Durham to record in his diary: "He is a good man, but clearly a fanatic, and in a more disciplined age, could not possibly have avoided the stake!" H. Hensley Henson, *Retrospect of an Unimportant Life*, vol 2 (Oxford UP, 1946), 247.

69. TSE echoes Thomson's gloomy interpretation of the Church of England: "By schism rent asunder, by heresies distressed, that body seems almost fanatically unfitted to be an apostle of reunion" (27).

70*. TSE's note: "The Porpoise Press, Edinburgh: 1S. net." On 30 May 1930, TSE wrote to F. S. Oliver: "There is no reason why I should not tell you that the Porpoise Press is a very small

Edinburgh venture which is now being backed by Faber and Faber. It is actually run chiefly by Thomson himself and a fellow Scot named George Blake" (*L5* 206). In a letter to Canon Underhill dated 9 Dec 1930, TSE described Thomson's study as "an able, if somewhat superficial pamphlet on the condition of his own church" (*L5* 419). On 17 July 1930, Dr. John White, first moderator of the newly united Church of Scotland, was received at the Lambeth Conference.

71. Thomson says that "the Reformation was nothing more than a temporary stoppage in the cross-Channel sailings" (6) and later: "It was felt that, though there might be some advantages in being a bridge church, there were absolutely none in a church that seemed to be merely a ferry taking passengers from one bank to another" (28). On 25 Nov 1930, TSE complained to Bishop Bell about Thomson's "abominable abuse of metaphor" (*L5* 405).

72. Ronald Knox, widely known as the *enfant terrible* of Anglo-Catholicism, converted to Catholicism in 1917. In "Recent Detective Fiction" (1927), TSE praised Knox's ventures into this genre, but on 18 Nov 1930, he told Father Martin D'Arcy that Knox's recent book *The Belief of Catholics* (1927) is "not a very good one; it is self-consciously smart." Thomson asks facetiously: "what Father Knox now has of the genuineness of emotions proceeding from a ceremony not so very different from the one he used ignorantly and mistakenly to take comfort from" (28). Father Vernon Johnson (1886-1969), author of *Notes on the Catholic Religion: Anglo-Catholicism Explained* (1925), was a former Anglican minister and Catholic convert.

73. In "Parliament and the New Prayer Book" (1928), TSE discusses Lord Halifax's opposition to the revised Prayer Book (3.431). In 1930, the third Viscount Halifax, a prominent Anglo-Catholic, said that he would leave the Church of England if the Lambeth Conference scheme of Church Union for South India came into being. In 1927, Robert Sencourt (George Gordon) introduced TSE to the second Viscount Halifax, an ecumenical churchman, whom TSE described in a letter to his mother of 5 Oct 1927 as "a very saintly man" (*L3* 736).

74. TSE's humor depends on the supposed short drop from the Low Church sympathies of Lords Brentford and Cushendun to Nonconformism.

75. Thomson suggests that "the important thing is to note that there are certain parties within the church, Catholic, Modernist, and extreme Protestant, and that these parties are endeavouring to drag the whole church after them on their diverging paths" (29).

76. The weekly *Church Times* was founded in 1863 to campaign for Anglo-Catholic principles.

77. The spiritual homes of the Church of Scotland, Tibetan Buddhism, and the Catholic Church, respectively.

78*. TSE's note: "See a remarkable letter from the Bishop of Durham in *The Times* of December 2nd, 1930, and the poverty of the replies." In a letter headed "Church and State" the Bishop of Durham lamented the failure of the Church of England to enforce obedience from the Bishop of Birmingham, claiming: "The one essential requirement of the situation is to make an end of the Gilbertian position into which the Establishment has degenerated, and which has been painfully illustrated in Birmingham" (10). However, the Bishop of Durham's gestures toward Disestablishment failed to generate further support in the correspondence columns of the *Times*.

79*. TSE's note: "When I say 'comic,' I am considering their *essence*, not their *operation*."

80. On 25 Nov 1930, TSE added in postscript to Bishop Bell: "I do not think that I am quite the only layman who feels the mind of the Editor of *The Church Times* is neither supple,

philosophic nor representative" (*L5* 407), and on 28 Nov, he told the Archbishop of York: "My personal point of view of Resolution 15 is certainly not that of the *Church Times*" (*L5* 412). Founded in 1911, the monthly *Modern Churchman* appealed to a readership of liberal Anglicans and Modernists.

81. The opening remarks of the encyclical letter of the Lambeth Report note that: "The ten years since we last met have seen the development of one vast political and social experiment which is, at least professedly, rooted in the denial of God's existence" (18).

82. TSE alludes to Ephesians 5:16: "Redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

Classicism and Romanticism

To the Editor of *The Dublin Review*

The Dublin Review, 188 (Apr 1931) 313

Sir, – I have read with much interest the correspondence of Mr. Maritain and Mr. Belgion in your January issue.[1] If I venture to intervene, it is not to correct any misstatement of my own views, as Mr. Maritain does not impute any to me. I dare say that I write primarily from the flattery of being mentioned so charmingly by Mr. Maritain, who should know very well my very high opinion of *him*; but secondarily, to cast doubt on two of his sentences.[2]

Mr. Maritain admits that "devant certains défenseurs des éternels principes classiques je trouve au romantisme des charmes enivrants" [135].[3] This admission is robbed of its piquancy when it is perceived to be one which everyone may make. For he is contrasting, not classical theory with romantic theory, nor classical works with romantic works, but certain critics (I suppose) with certain poets. The comparison is not in kind. If he said that after reading La Harpe for half an hour he found inebriating charm in Verlaine no one would be likely to protest. And, on the other hand, I cannot conceive anyone finding such charm either in *romanticism* or in *classicism*; whereas, if one finds it at all, one will probably find it in works of art of both types.

I quite agree that the "dispute" between classicism and romanticism is *périmée*; but then it always was.[4] The terms do not mean quite the same thing for any two people, or for any two decades; and they even shift their meaning for the same observer considering different ages and material. They are affected by every new work of art. Yet such apparently unsatisfactory terms have a way of being extraordinarily useful.[5]

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In "Art and Mr. Maritain" (*Dublin Review*, 87, Oct 1930, 201-15), Montgomery Belgion attacked Maritain's neo-Thomist aesthetics, including a defense of classicism, as articulated in

Art et scolastique (1927) [*Art and Scholasticism* (1930)], concluding that "Mr. Maritain's theory appears as but a variant of the great Romantic theory! . . . He is the apologist of what he professes to condemn" (214, 215). On 20 Oct 1930, Maritain wrote to the *Dublin Review* to express his belief that Romantic theory was a form of heresy; his letter, together with Belgion's rejoinder reiterating his position, was published in the issue of Jan 1931 (134-36).

2. Following his remarks on defenders of classical principles who are intoxicated by romanticism, Maritain explains: "Que T. S. Eliot me pardonne, pour qui j'ai tant d'admiration et d'amitié. Il sait bien d'ailleurs que ce n'est pas à lui que je pense ici" [135]. [May T. S. Eliot forgive me, for whom I have so much admiration and friendship. He well knows besides that it's not him I am thinking of here.] In his "Commentary" of Jan 1927, TSE introduced Maritain to readers of the *Criterion*: "In this number we present a new and unpublished essay by M. Jacques Maritain, the most conspicuous figure, and probably the most powerful force, in contemporary French philosophy" (3.3). The second part of Maritain's essay "Poetry and Religion," translated by TSE from *Art et scolastique*, was published in the *Criterion* for May 1927.

3. *Trans*: "before some defenders of the eternal classical principles I find in romanticism some intoxicating charms."

4. *périmée*: out-of-date

5. On 9 Aug 1930, TSE wrote to I. A. Richards: "Another useful piece of scavenging would be to elucidate the whole pseudo-controversy of Humanism, and Romanticism and Classicism" (*L5* 285). TSE abandoned a long-running dispute with John Middleton Murry regarding the use of the terms Romanticism and Classicism after the publication of "Mr. Middleton Murry's Synthesis" in the *Criterion* of Oct 1927 (3.271).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 10 (Apr 1931) 481-90

The social and political situation in England is such that we now hear from the most orthodox editorial pulpits in the country that something must be done – something, that is, better than merely turning the present Government out and putting the last one back again. For example, in *The Observer* of February 22nd, Mr. Garvin had come to the opinion that a new National Government should be formed, to deal with the actual emergency.[1] We do not dispute the historical knowledge and political acumen of Mr. Garvin, when we suggest that a National Government, which seems to be a phrase covering a coalition of all three parties, might arouse somewhat less than one third of the mild enthusiasm which any of the three parties is now able to excite by itself, unless something more permanent is proposed to succeed it. If the country is to revert to the present system of government after the "emergency" has been dealt with, we can hardly expect the present system of government to issue from its hibernation as youthful and virile as ever. It will have suffered a diminishment: for we shall be forced to think of it as a friendly three-handed game which is all very well when things are going well, and while it does not matter much who is in power, but which must always be stowed away as soon as any serious business is afoot. And we shall hardly be persuaded that serious business is not preparing while the game is going forward.

If on the other hand, it be admitted that the present system not only does not work well now but probably will never work well again, then something more stable than an emergency government must be envisaged, before we proceed to so serious a step as the formation of an emergency or coalition government at all. For our part, we think that a coalition government, at the present juncture, would be only one kind of deathblow, and that the most reckless, to the party system. It would mean that a number of eminent politicians of three parties would weaken their prestige by surrendering some of their convictions, or else weaken it still more by admitting tacitly that their convictions were only prejudices or party creeds. It is too much to expect that men whose careers have been made by opposing each other should suddenly and openly fall into each other's arms, and kick away the ladders on which they have mounted while they are still on the top rung. We are not convinced that a combination of old gangsters will be a great improvement on the old gangs separately. And it is irrelevant to point to the coalition government of wartime.[2] The present time may well be as critical, or more critical, than the war; it does not follow that a crisis which is primarily domestic can be overcome by the same methods as a crisis which was primarily foreign.

Even, however, should the coalition thrive for a time, it would probably not thrive as long as the "emergency," and its disruption would probably leave the country in worse case than before. For there is no question of "tiding over" or "weathering" or "stemming" anything; the matter of it is not even merely to adapt the country to world conditions which have changed, but to adapt it to world conditions which are going on changing. It is very depressing to find that the Labour Party in office has proved not only conservative but reactionary. The one most rational form of representation in the House of Commons, the representation of the Universities, is, if the Labour Party has its way, to be destroyed.[3] It is amazing stupidity, for the sake of perhaps a slight temporary numerical advantage, to remove just those men who do actually represent something. Far from abolishing this form of representation, we ought to increase it; and to have more members responsible to genuine interests with which they are acquainted rather than to mixed constituencies which they may hardly know. But for such intelligence we can hardly look to an official Labour Party which seems merely to be a compost of the most outworn beliefs and practices of the Conservative and Liberal parties together.

The Mosley programme (Macmillan: 6d.), though in some respects vague or feeble, contains at least some germs of intelligence; and a pronouncement by men who have had the courage to disassociate themselves from any party must be read with respect.[4] It recognises that the nineteenth century is over, and that a thorough reorganization of industry and of agriculture is essential. The fundamental objection to it, of course, is that it is not fundamental enough. The changes are propounded in the same old cautious and sensible, and at the same time catchy, phrasing, as any other political manifesto. That word of prudence, "emergency," occurs again and again; the reader feels coaxed and reassured that there is nothing really revolutionary about all this; whoever the reader is, it is all for his good. What is lacking, perhaps, and what is essential for enthusiasm, is the evidence of profound moral conviction. We do not expect, in a popular political pamphlet, to find explicit any philosophical insight; but we should like to feel that something of the sort was agitating the minds of the framers and signatories; if the present pamphlet arose out of such depths, the emotion has been too carefully dissimulated.[5] *Politique d'abord*, certainly; but *politique* means more than prosperity and comfort, if it is to mean even that; it means the social aspect of the Good Life.[6]

I have recently read a book from America (*I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition*, Harper's, $3.00) which is hardly likely to have much notice in England, because the situation discussed will be considered very local even in America. It is a symposium by "twelve southerners," and suffers from the defects common to symposia, of repetition, unevenness and incompleteness.[7] But there is a general problem which concerns the whole world; though probably it will not be perceived to concern even the whole of America. The question of the Good Life is raised; and how far it is possible for mankind to accept industrialization without spiritual harm. The complaint is not merely that the South was ruined and subjected by the Civil War, but that it is now well on the way towards being northernized; that coal, oil, iron and factories have altered the relation of man to his world, and that the Good and Happy Life is becoming less possible. The old Southern society, with all its defects, vices and limitations, was still in its way a spiritual entity; and now the organization of society is wholly materialistic.[8]

The writers are somewhat unfair to some other parts of their country, and they tend to exaggerate the blessings of England and Scotland in contrast to their own depression.[9] For instance, the contrast in America is no longer, as it seemed in the '60s, a conflict between North and South.[10] It is a conflict between all of the local and spiritually living districts or *enclaves* and the dominant uniform mode of existence which is New York and the monotony of the Middle West. A New Englander cannot read the book without admitting that his own country was ruined as the South is ruined, and that New England was ruined first. Anyone who reads Professor Morison's interesting and authoritative *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Milford: 21s.) cannot but feel that in that isolated, cantankerous, often narrow, bigoted and heretical society there was more intellectual and spiritual flowering, more beauty of manners, architecture, painting and decorative art – and a local and peculiar beauty at that – than is possible in New England to-day, when Boston is five hours from New York by train, and no distance at all by air.[11] And the contrast and sometimes conflict, between the different and complementary types of New England and Virginia, give the late Colonial and the early Republican history of America (to 1829) an interest and an urbanity which American history has not had since.[12] The American intellectual of to-day has almost no chance of continuous development upon his own soil and in the environment which his ancestors, however humble, helped to form. He must be an expatriate: either to languish in a provincial university, or abroad, or, the most complete expatriation of all, in New York.[13] And he is merely a more manifest example of what *tends* to happen in all countries.

Unrestrained industrialism, then (with its attendant evils of overproduction, excessive "wealth," an irrelevance and lack of relation of production to consumption which it attempts vainly to overcome by the nightmare expedient of "advertisement"), destroys the upper classes first. You cannot make an aristocrat out of a company chairman, though you can make him a peer;[14] and in a thoroughly industrial society the only artist left will be the international film producer. France, of course, has resisted better than any other country. Provincial French life is dull enough, but not without grace and the beauty of family union; and the population of Paris lives entirely in flats; yet I have hardly known a French intellectual in Paris – with the exception of M. Cocteau the "Parisian," which perhaps helps to prove the rule – who did not keep up a proud and affectionate contact with *son pays*,[15] be it only a farmhouse in central France. "Regionalism" may of course be carried to the point of absurdity. But it is a sound and right reaction which impelled Mr. Allen Tate and his eleven Southerners to write their book; and which impels Mr. George Malcolm Thomson and his Scottish friends to affirm that Scotland ought to be something more than a Suburb of Greater London, or a confined industrial district populated by lower class Irish immigrants.[16] And it is something of which politicians ought to take thought, if they are capable of thinking in any terms except "emergencies."

The *Sunday Times* of February 22nd is apprehensive about the future of Oxford.[17] Under the pressure of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it appears, the enrolment is falling off, and something must be done to keep up the numbers of students. It would seem that Oxford is another of our big industries in a bad way. Here is overproduction again, and underconsumption; a great plant of buildings, tutors and foundations going to waste for lack of undergraduates. Well then, something must be done to stimulate consumption; in other words, to attract more students, whoever they are and whatever they want to study. The *Sunday Times* is particularly disturbed by the pernicious ideas of Dr. Phelps. This misguided reactionary had the temerity to suggest that some of the professional and practical studies should be dropped (the word of course is "jettisoned") and that the Classics should remain the centre of University Study, "with a modicum of pure science."[18] So the *Sunday Times* is horrified; and asserts roundly that Oxford must be made more "up to date"; "less exclusively a pleasant backwater of the humanities and more a place where men and women can get a practical and efficient training for life in all its branches" [14].

For life in all its branches! Not, you observe, for "life"; the industrial society recognises nothing so unpractical as "life"; "life" is only for "pleasant backwaters." But for "life in all its branches"; that means training in "efficiency," for one branch then only. It does not mean training in adaptability; but often training for an occupation which the victim may find already overoccupied by the time he is trained into readiness to occupy it. It does not mean training for the Good Life, it does not mean any training in the use of leisure, in appreciation and enjoyment; for not everybody is capable of profiting by such training. It means more and bigger and more modern buildings, Graduate Schools of Business Administration on the American model, and something for everybody except those who want an education. But it would be a national disaster if the enrolment fell off; for Oxford and Cambridge are two of our biggest industries, known the world over; and what is manufactured in them matters less than that the looms of youth should be kept running at full time; rationalization and mass production must be applied; for it would be undemocratic to apply modern methods to motor cars and not apply them to men.[19]

It is ignored that the Universities were far more democratic in the seventeenth century than they are to-day; but they were democratic in the way of levelling up and not in the way of levelling down. Andrewes and Laud, to take the two names that first occur to my mind, were of humble origin; the Ministry of Education under the Tudors was hardly the perfect engine of culture that it is to-day; yet the system was good enough to help these two men to make their way up from almost nothing, the one to become a translator of the Bible and one of the greatest masters of devotion that England can boast (if England ever *did* boast of such eccentrics), and the other to become one of the greatest ecclesiastical statesmen that England has ever known.[20] I dare say that they were "traitors to their class," and that they did wrong to accept educational advantages denied to the children of their parents' neighbours; nowadays they might have risen to fame and power by the stage of being Trades' Union Officials.[21] But though educated in "pleasant backwaters" they left their mark on history; nor do I suppose that they, and men like them, would have governed England any better had they had diplomas from the London School of Economics.

The complaint is sometimes raised that the British do not take enough interest in their Art. If, however, they took no interest at all, everything might be managed skilfully to impose works of art upon them; a nation wholly without interest in art might be perfectly contented even if the streets of its capital were lined with masterpieces of architecture and sculpture. But the British public, unfortunately, does take a kind of muddling interest in art; that is probably due to its having too much schooling; and I am not thinking at this point of the "lower classes," but of the over- and badly-educated middle and upper classes. The first recent instance in my mind is the case of the unfortunate Mr. Hardiman, and his model for a statue of the late Earl Haig. I had never heard of Mr. Hardiman until the crisis was precipitated; he may be, for aught I know, an excellent sculptor; I have nothing by which to judge except the photographs in *The Times*.[22] But whatever the merit or demerit of Mr. Hardiman's work as a sculptor, he has been declared to be ignorant of horseflesh ("conformation" I believe is the word)[23] and ignorant of the dress and demeanour of a Field Marshal sitting his horse. I have only seen photographs of Mr. Hardiman's first proposal and of his second. Of the two, the first seemed the more attractive, and suggested that the sculptor was not merely competing with Court Photographers, but zealously trying, to the best of his ability, to make a plastic composition of some grace. And it set me to wondering what the friends of Charles King and Martyr, had the columns of *The Times* been open to them, and supposing that they were good military and hunting people, would have said of his statue in Whitehall.[24] But the chief point of the bitter controversy, which no one seems to have observed, is the question: what should be the relation between Art and Public Monuments? Because, if a sculptor of exceptional merit, such as Mr. Epstein, or even Mr. Dobson, to say nothing of Mr. Brancusi (whom no one in England has ever heard of, as he is not even an American) had competed and got the lucky dip, would the correspondence in *The Times* have been any less violent than that directed against the luckless Mr. Hardiman?[25] I think not. The question is this: when we wish to show our gratitude to a noble and gallant servant of the Crown and the public, do we wish to do so by a Work of Art or an exact likeness? And if there is to be a clear distinction between the Work of Art and the Public Monument, it would be well to impress this distinction upon the minds of artists, and not mislead persons like Mr. Hardiman, whose chief error seems to have been the delusion that he could produce something which might be both. As things are, we are beaten all round by the French; they can produce works of art, and they also know how to produce public monuments, which are definitely ugly, but definitely public monuments. Once you are used to the convention, the Place Victor-Hugo is not intolerable, and if you are going in for monuments, there is much to be said for surrounding a portrait bust with sylphs, nymphs, pagan goddesses and muses offering wreaths, and the other allegorical female companionship with which the French are accustomed to provide the effigies of their great men.[26] Were I a great man myself, I think I should prefer to be commemorated by sculpture which could give delight to a posterity indifferent to my name, than by sculpture which perpetuated my photograph.[27] That perhaps is a matter of choice. But so long as we pretend that the motives of the work of Art and the Public Monument can be wholly reconciled, our streets will merely be encumbered.

If the public wants a portrait of Lord Haig it can have it; the main thing is that it should keep the distinction clear. The vocal public mind about Mr. Epstein seems to be as confused as it is about Mr. Hardiman. Mr. Epstein has also created a new work. It may be good, as sculpture, or bad. But it is not a public monument; it has been on exhibition in a private gallery; those who do not like it need not see it; but those persons who dislike the subject have raised objections that they might be better entitled to raise, were it a Monument in the centre of Piccadilly Circus.[28] It is not a monument; it is not a portrait of an eminent British Lady in an interesting condition, but a study of primitive gestation; and if it is good sculpture, it is more than that: if it is good sculpture it has that transition from representative meaning to a composition of masses and planes, lights and shadows, to a design; from the human to the abstractly sensuous, the transition which only art and religion can make.

We mention with deep regret the death of Mr. Clere Parsons, who had recently become a contributor to *The Criterion*.[29] Parsons had a brilliant undergraduate career at Oxford, and was well known to recent Oxford generations for his editorship of the Oxford *Outlook*. Only delicate health prevented him from obtaining easily an appointment at the British Museum; at the time of his death he had just taken up his duties in a post in the Bodleian Library. Those who knew him know that he was both a poet and a critic of great promise, who lived not long enough to leave much more than that impression upon his friends and acquaintance.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. J. L. Garvin, "A Plague on your Parties! A Plea for National Government," *Observer* (22 Feb 1931), 16. Garvin argued that the Parliamentary system had reached a state of sectarian paralysis, "sapping the foundations of national greatness" and producing "a mood of sullen abstention." He proposed an all-party coalition National Government to deal with the current economic crisis.

James Louis Garvin (1868-1947), radical Tory journalist, since 1908 editor of the *Observer* Sunday newspaper. On 23 Feb, TSE commented to Bonamy Dobrée that one of the things on his mind was "Garvin's clamour for a Coalition (thinly disguised under the more grandiose title of a National Party), than which I should prefer a *coup de force* (with of course ourselves, Mosley and O. Stanley posing on the balcony). Nothing to my mind could be worse for the country than the present shuffling of Old Gangs, than a Union of all the Old Gangs" (*L5* 490). At this time, Garvin's leaders in the *Observer* occasionally voiced support for Oswald Mosley.

2. Garvin's *Observer* article pointed to the precedent of the first British coalition government formed in May 1915 during World War I.

3. On the democratic principle of one adult, one vote, in 1930 the Labour government introduced an electoral reform bill which proposed abolishing university constituencies, which returned predominantly Conservative MPs, but the bill was delayed by opposition in both the House of Commons and the House of Lords. University seats survived until they and other forms of plural voting were abolished by the Labour government of 1948, taking effect from the dissolution of Parliament in 1950.

4. *A National Policy* (London: Macmillan, 1931). The politician Sir Oswald Mosley (1896-1980) resigned from the Labour Party and launched the breakaway New Party on 1 Mar 1931. His manifesto *A National Policy* contained radical political initiatives – founded on the home market, protectionism, and an empire economic trading bloc – designed to reform the British economy. On 2 Apr 1931, TSE wrote to A. L. Rowse to inquire "what you think of the Mosley lot and the last move. I am the more interested because I have put in an approving word in my next Commentary! as I was influenced by the sneering tone of *The Sunday Times*. I dare say Mosley *is* a 'careerist,' but the point is are his ideas right or wrong? which does not matter to *The Sunday Times*. If he could attract one or two of the more intelligent younger conservatives (there are *very* few I know) it would be to his advantage." TSE had elaborated his position to Rowse on 7 Mar : "I did not feel very hopeful about the Mosley group myself. But the point is this: Mosley may have struck a bit too soon; but as things are drifting at present, it seems to me only a question of time before there is a popular movement towards *some* form of Hitlerism in England, and I want to think about it before it happens. For *any* strong definite cry may be the 'programme'; it depends merely on circumstances whether the appeal is to revolution or to reaction, to Toryism or to Socialism. The actual Mosley programme seems to me to fall between two stools; it aims at those who continue to believe that the whole difficulty can be settled by finding an economic dodge better than the dodges of Baldwin, George, Macdonald & Snowden,

or than that of Keynes and the pundits, and who are willing to try any purely *economic* heresy so long as all their other beliefs are undisturbed. Now my instinct is that any heresy violent enough to save matters (and I believe matters to be in a much worse way than most people think) – cannot be a mere economic heresy – we are hardened to those – but must be something requiring real self sacrifice of the individual, whoever he may be, to the common good; but I will not admit that the Common Good can any longer imply getting the better of some other nation's Common Good." TSE concluded "I quite agree that the Mosley crowd will fail through not attaching to themselves some powerful economic interest: but what will happen when people get to the point of exasperation where they give no damn for any economic interest?" (*L5* 507-08).

5. Mosley's manifesto carried the signatures of seventeen Labour Party members: Oswald and Cynthia Mosley, Oliver Baldwin, Aneurin Bevan, William J. Brown, Robert Forgan, J. Frank Horrabin, M. Phillips Price, E. John Strachey, J. Batey, W. G. Cove, J. Lovat Fraser, S. F. Markham, John McGovern, J. L. McShane, H. T. Muggeridge, and C. J. Simmons. However, only five Labour MPs and one Conservative joined Mosley's New Party.

6. *Trans*: "politics first." A slogan taken from Charles Maurras who declared: "Nous le maintenons en entier: *politique d'abord, – politique nationaliste, – politique du nationalisme intégral*" [we hold to this programme in its entirety: politics first – nationalist politics – the politics of integral nationalism], *La Politique religieuse* (Paris: Nouvelle librairie nationale, 1912), 376. In his letter to Rowse of 7 Mar, discussing Mosley's economic reforms and the state of British industry, TSE observed: "I don't see how you can ever get down to a 'world price level' unless you can get a world, or at least a very substantial part of the world, agreeing on what is valuable; on what is the Good Life" (*L5* 508). In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Jan 1931, TSE discussed "different prescriptions for the individual Good life" (4.216).

7. *I'll Take My Stand: The South and the Agrarian Tradition* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1930). Contributions by John Crowe Ransom, Donald Davidson, Frank Lawrence Owsley, John Gould Fletcher, Lyle H. Lanier, Allen Tate, Herman Clarence Nixon, Andrew Nelson Lytle, Robert Penn Warren, John Donald Wade, Henry Blue Kline, Stark Young.

8. The volume's "Introduction: A Statement of Principles" contains the following declaration: "All the articles bear in the same sense upon the book's title-subject: all tend to support a Southern way of life against what may be called the American or prevailing way; and all as much as agree that the best terms in which to represent the distinction are contained in the phrase, Agrarian *versus* Industrial" (xix). Their manifesto asserts: "The theory of agrarianism is that the culture of the soil is the best and most sensitive of vocations, and that therefore it should have the economic preference and enlist the maximum number of workers" (xxix).

In his first Page-Barbour Lecture delivered at the University of Virginia on 10 May 1933, TSE told the audience: "I have been much interested, since the publication a few years ago of a book called *I'll Take My Stand*, in what is sometimes called the agrarian movement in the South, and I look forward to any further statements by the same group of writers" (*ASG* 15). On 18 May, TSE informed Allen Tate: "I have just returned from Charlottesville, where I opened my series of lectures by referring touchingly to the Nashville Group (rehash of my commentary on *I'll Take My Stand*). I have brought back a strong desire to see more of the South, and a still stronger sympathy with local aspirations."

9. Ransom's essay "Reconstructed but Unregenerate" refers to "the position of Scotland under the British Crown – a section with a very local and peculiar culture . . . secure and respected" (24).

10. The American Civil War (1861-65) ended with the surrender of the southern Confederate States at Appomattox on 9 Apr 1865.

11. Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony: A Gallery of our Intellectual Ancestors* (1930). On 2 Sept 1930, TSE remarked to his brother Henry: "I lunched yesterday with Sam Morison – a distant cousin whom I believe you have never met, and Professor of American History at Harvard – whom I find very agreeable and intelligent" (*L5* 308). Morison (1887-1976), who was descended from TSE's forebear Andrew Eliot, reviewed a political history of the reign of George III for the *Criterion* in July 1931 (760-61).

12. On 23 Apr 1928, TSE told Herbert Read: "Some day I want to write an essay about the point of view of an American who wasn't an American, because his America ended in 1829; and wasn't a Yankee, because he was born in the South and went to school in New England as a small boy with a nigger drawl but who wasn't a southerner in the South because his people were northerners in a border state and looked down on all southerners and Virginians" (*L4* 137-38). On 27 Nov 1930, TSE wrote to Allen Tate: "you may say what you like about the Adams or anyone else, though I persist in believing that if they had not been turned out in 1829 by your abominable compatriot, Andrew Jackson, the American democracy might have been preserved, and the Civil War averted" (*L5* 410). In 1828, Andrew Jackson defeated John Quincy Adams to become the seventh President of the United States. Jacksonian democracy was the political movement from 1830 to 1850 which expanded voting rights to include nearly all white male adult citizens.

13. In his essay "A Mirror for Artists," Donald Davidson observes, "The schism between the artist and society, already foreshadowed in the inherent weaknesses of New England, became more and more exaggerated until today France and England harbor veritable colonies of expatriates" (48), later commenting that "the great majority of American artists . . . often migrate to New York, at considerable risk to their growth" (57).

14. In "A Cooking Egg" (1919), TSE satirized the wealthy industrialist Sir Alfred Mond, chairman of ICI, who was created a Baronet in 1910; although TSE praised Mond as "independent and intelligent" in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1929 (3.598).

15. *Trans*: his country

16. George Malcolm Thomson (1899-1996), journalist and Scottish nationalist. An anonymous review of Thomson's *The Rediscovery of Scotland* for the *Criterion* of July 1929 (probably by TSE) cast doubt on the details of Thomson's polemic against Irish immigration to Scotland: "As a writer [Thomson] is too much concerned with verbal brilliance of the journalist's kind; as a critic he is not too discriminating in the acceptance of his evidence; as a polemist he is deficient in having no definite ground of his own to stand on, political or cultural" (761). On 30 May 1930, TSE told F. S. Oliver: "I hoped that you would like Thomson's pamphlet [*Will the Scottish Church Survive?*]. There is no reason why I should not tell you that the Porpoise Press is a very small Edinburgh venture which is now being backed by Faber and Faber. It is actually run chiefly by Thomson himself and a fellow Scot named George Blake. In the past, it has produced little but meagre volumes of mediocre verse, some of it no more Scottish than the man who joined a Scots regiment because he had his clothes cleaned at the Perth Dyeworks; but

these young men are really ambitious to do something for their country, ardent nationalists – I share the views of my friends of Action Française about local self-government – and if they can get together other writers as good as Thomson himself I think they may do something interesting. If they do anything as good as this pamphlet I will let you know" (*L5* 206-07). In a letter of 3 Aug 1932 to George Scott Moncrieff, TSE refers to George Malcolm Thomson as "my friend."

In his proposal for BBC talks on the "Modern Dilemma" in Mar 1932, TSE identified the topic "Literature and the question of regionalism (Maurras, Ireland, Scotland, Southern States of America)" (4.325).

17. "The Future of Oxford," *Sunday Times* (22 Feb 1931), 14. This editorial considers the effects of the economic crisis and increasing taxation on student numbers at Oxford. On 23 Feb, TSE told Dobrée he had been pondering "the alarm raised by *The Sunday Times* that the undergraduate enrolment of the Universities (O[xford]. and C[ambridge].) is falling off," adding "Thank God if it is" (*L5* 490).

18. Lancelot Ridley Phelps (1853-1936), Provost of Oriel College, Oxford, 1914-29, served as chairman of a Home Office departmental committee on the relief of the casual poor in 1929-30.

19. In "the looms of youth" TSE alludes to Alec Waugh's reflection on his public school days in his 1917 novel *The Loom of Youth* (see1.735, n.11). In his letter to A. L. Rowse of 7 Mar, TSE complained: "It seems to me that at present the whole of England is being mapped out according to the present development of the motor industry," explaining: "we build up, by accident, great industries employing great numbers of men, for objects which are *morally* indefensible . . . and we become morally responsible for putting the rest of the population in the morally undesirable position of being able to own motor cars because owing to the motor car industry they have to live in places in which they couldn't live unless they had motor cars" (*L5* 507-08).

20. Lancelot Andrewes, the son of an Essex mariner of modest prosperity, was educated at a free charity school; William Laud, the son of a wealthy clothier, was educated at a grammar school in Reading.

21. TSE challenges a contemporary Marxist term of abuse. The first mention of "class traitor" in the OED dates from *Scribner's Magazine* in Apr 1929: "A certain woman organizer regularly hurled the name of 'class traitors!' at the young women who were responsible for unionizing their fellow workers."

22. Upon the death of Field Marshal Douglas Haig, first Earl Haig (1861-1928), Parliament commissioned a memorial statue from the sculptor Alfred Frank Hardiman (1891-1949). The publication of Hardiman's model of his equestrian statue of Haig in the *Times* of 24 Jul 1929 drew a number of angry letters. Following sustained criticism, Hardiman revised his design, although one correspondent to the *Times* considered the alterations "monstrous" (28 Jan 1931, 13). The bronze statue was not unveiled in Whitehall, Westminster, until 1937.

23. On 26 Jan 1931, the Duke of Portland complained in the *Times* that Hardiman's revised design represented "most, if not all, of the faults in conformation which it is possible for any horse to possess" (6); "conformation" (OED): "The manner in which a thing is formed with respect to the disposition of its parts."

24. The statue of Charles I by the French sculptor Hubert Le Sueur was the first equestrian bronze statue (1633) in England. The statue is situated at the Trafalgar Square end of Whitehall facing toward Charles I's place of execution at Banqueting House.

25. On 16? Apr 1921, TSE told Wyndham Lewis to "*dis*sociate yourself, in the public mind, from any other group and from all other British painters," including the sculptor Frank Dobson (1888-1963), arguing that "you drag them up to your level and give them a chance to repudiate *you*" (*L1* 552). On 12 Mar 1922, TSE told Ezra Pound that Lady Rothermere "warmly admires the Brancusi no. [autumn 1921] of *Little Review*" (*L1* 642), which contained Pound's essay on the Romanian abstract sculptor Constantin Brâncuşi (1876-1957), then resident in Paris.

26. TSE refers to the statue of Victor Hugo by Louis-Ernest Barrias erected in the Place Victor-Hugo in 1902. Four Muses (Ode, Drama, Epic, Satire) gaze upward toward the seated Hugo. The lower plinth featured bas-relief scenes from Hugo's works. The statue was destroyed during the German occupation of France, sometime in 1941-42.

27. Jacob Epstein's bust of T. S. Eliot (1951) is on display in the National Portrait Gallery.

28. TSE refers to Epstein's marble sculpture *Genesis* (1929-30), depicting a stylized naked female in the later stages of pregnancy, first exhibited at the Leicester Galleries in Feb 1931. On 7 Feb 1931, the *Times* art critic called Epstein's sculpture "a terrible waste of good marble" (10).

29. Clere Parsons (1908-31) was educated at Christ Church, Oxford, where he met the Auden Group of poets and edited *Oxford Poetry* and *Oxford Outlook*. Parsons came to TSE's attention in 1930 and contributed a review of John Rodker's *Adolphe 1920* to the *Criterion* for Jan 1931 (333-36), praised by TSE in a letter to him of 17 Oct 1930 "as very just as well as interesting" (*L5* 354). Faber & Faber published a selection of Parsons's *Poems* posthumously in 1932 following his death from pneumonia.

Dryden the Poet[1]

Dryden's position in English literature is unique. Far below Shakespeare, and even below Milton, as we must put him, he yet has, just by reason of his precise degree of inferiority, a kind of importance which neither Shakespeare nor Milton has – the importance of his *influence*. It is this nice question of influence that I wish to investigate first, in relation to what I may call the "literary dictator," that is, in our history, Ben Jonson, Dryden, Samuel Johnson and in his way, Coleridge. Are we to say that poets like Shakespeare and Milton were without influence? Certainly not, but "influence," in the sense in which we can cope with the term, is something more limited. The disproportion between Shakespeare and his immediate followers, among the dramatists, is so great that the influence of Shakespeare is a trifling thing in comparison with Shakespeare himself; and as for Milton, that was so peculiar a genius that although he had plenty of mimics during the eighteenth century, he can hardly be said to have any followers. For "influence," as Dryden had influence, a poet must not be so great as to overshadow all followers. Dryden was followed by Pope, and, a century later, by Samuel Johnson; both men of great original genius, who developed the medium left them by Dryden, in ways which cast honour both on them and on him. It should seem then no paradox to say that Dryden was the great influence upon English verse that he was, because he was *not* too great to have any influence at all. He was neither the consummate poet of earlier times, nor the eccentric poet of later. He was happy both in his predecessors and in his successors. A hundred years is a long time for the stamp of one man to remain upon a literature; poets' influence and reputation cannot last so long in our days; and that makes Dryden a central, a typical figure in English letters. He is in himself the Malherbe, the Boileau, the Corneille, and almost the Molière (almost, because Congreve refined and surpassed him in comedy) of the seventeenth century in England; and to him, as much as to any individual, we owe our civilisation.

As a figure, there is nothing picturesque about the man John Dryden. He came of a small county family like hundreds of others; he had, for a man of his origins, no great worldly advantages; he married a lady of superior rank, who brought him no exceptional advantage either, and apparently little domestic happiness. He was an ordinary seeming, florid countryman, whose manners, according to the next and more refined generation, were not of the most polished. We do not know whether it was by the brilliance of his conversation that he was the great figure of Wills's Coffee House for all the hours that he passed there every day; but there he was admired by minor men of letters, and courted by bluestocking noblemen.[2] If not because of his powers of talk, in an age when men talked and drank for more hours a day than they can afford to do now, and when they wrote, wrote at higher speed than we can, then it was because they all recognised that Dryden could do everything that they would have liked to do, and because what he wrote did not exceed the scope of their comprehension. I cannot imagine Shakespeare cutting such a figure in a tavern or coffee-house; that solitary person surely had too much in his head which his tap-room companions could not understand; the predecessor of Dryden in this role is, of course, Ben Jonson. But although of Jonson we have so few personal remains, yet the notes and the anecdotes which we have give us at least the illusion of as definite a character as that of Dr. Samuel Johnson. We remember the story of Ben Jonson, that when he returned to the Anglican fold after his temporary defection to Rome, he showed his enthusiasm by seizing the chalice, at his first communion, and draining it to the last drop.[3] We can never see Dryden so clearly; yet his age was in accord that he expressed each man better than any man could express himself.

Being so completely representative, Dryden not only formed the mould for the next age, but himself derived very clearly from the last. In his work there is nothing unexpected, no new element with unknown properties. As a poet, Dryden came to resolve the contradictions of the previous period, and select from it the styles which were capable of development. His first verse, though clever enough of its kind to earn ready commendations, is distinctly bad. It is encumbered with all the late metaphysical conceits which he was himself to destroy. Cleveland and Benlowes are lightfooted by comparison;[4] for they traced their patterns with conviction; and of the early verses of Dryden one can only say that they are by a man doing his best to talk an idiom alien to him: but for sudden flashes of wit and sense here and there, one would say that their author could never be a poet. It used to be thought that the poetic styles of Dryden and Pope were artificial.[5] One has only to compare them with the style of Dryden's immediate predecessor, Abraham Cowley, to prove the contrary.[6] Dryden became a great poet because he could *not* write an artificial style; because it was intolerable to him; because he had that uncorruptible sincerity of word which at all times distinguishes the good writer from the bad, and at critical times such as his, distinguishes the great writer from the little one. What Dryden did in fact was to reform the language, and devise a natural, conversational style of speech in verse in place of an artificial and decadent one.

Too much can still be made, I think, of Dryden's debt to Waller and Denham, and to his contemporary Oldham.[7] Oldham, certainly, is very near to him; Oldham is rough and unpolished, but occasionally in his "rugged line" there breaks out a vigour not unlike Dryden's. His satires are still readable. But to Waller and Denham, as practitioners of the heroic couplet, his debt can be exaggerated. As Pope says, "Waller was smooth," indeed, but his smoothness is feebleness, compared to anything accomplished by Dryden or Pope himself: the smoothness of an ambling pad-pony compared to that of a fiery horse with an expert rider.[8] Waller mostly, and Denham except in one passage, send us to sleep; and Dryden never allows us to do that. I think that Dryden owes more to his reaction against the artifices of the late metaphysical verse, than to any sedulous study of Waller. For the content of his couplet, the sensibility which informs it, is as different from that of Waller as well could be.

It is not irrelevant to compare the operation of Dryden with that of Donne. Donne likewise was a reformer of the language. This is not so immediately apparent in Donne's case, for his career is overlapped by the Elizabethan dramatists, who were still, after Shakespeare, exploring the possibilities of dramatic blank verse. But consider that Shakespearean blank verse was soon to expire with the set phrases of Shirley and others, that it had nearly gone its course, and consider what the lyric verse of Shakespeare's time was.[9] It was essentially verse for music; therefore its intellectual content and its range of emotion was restricted. The songs of Shakespeare gain a great deal – perhaps this has not been enough remarked – by their dramatic position in the plays: a song like "Full fathom five" is suffused by the meaning and feeling of the passage in which it occurs; the songs of Shakespeare are not interludes or interruptions, but part of the structure of the plays in which they occur.[10] Observing this attribute, we can say that for lyric verse there was very little future, had it not been for Donne. Donne did away with all the stage properties of the ordinary lyric verse of the Elizabethans; he introduced into lyric verse a style of conversation, of direct natural speech; and this was a revolution comparable to the development of blank verse into a conversational medium, from Kyd to the mature Shakespeare. And by this innovation Donne gave to the Caroline poets a vehicle which they would hardly have been able to devise for themselves.

By the time when Dryden began to write, the vigour of the style initiated by Donne had quite gone: the natural had become the artificial. For there is not, in verse, any wholly objective distinction between the natural and the artificial style. Whether a style is natural is whether it is natural to the man who writes it. It is harder to be natural than to be artificial; it requires a great deal more work, and is painful and unpleasant, because sincerity is always painful and unpleasant. Well, Dryden did the work, and experienced no doubt the pain and unpleasantness, and he restored English verse to the condition of speech.

Now when we say "conversational," or the quality of the spoken language in verse, we are inclined to limit it to certain kinds of conversation, perhaps more particularly of an intimate nature; so it is easier for us to perceive this naturalness in Donne than in Dryden. But we have to consider what are the essentials of good speech. At no time, I know, are the written language and the spoken language identical. Obviously, they cannot be: if we talked extempore exactly as we write no one would listen, and if we wrote exactly as we talk, no one would read. But speech can never divorce itself, beyond some point, from the written word, without damage to itself; and writing can never beyond some point alienate itself from speech, without self-destruction. Now Dryden's couplets may not seem at first sight to echo our own way of speech. That may be partly because the standards of good English in conversation were higher then, and partly because the spoken word, in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, meant much more *public* speech than it does to us; it meant oratory and eloquence. True, thanks to the radio, we more often listen to public oratory than we did a few years ago. But we hardly expect the sublime; we may prefer the chatty, and if any of our acquaintance, in private company, holds forth and harangues at length, we are apt to qualify him as a bore. But, in the time of Dryden, speech was rather speech in public than in private; and Dryden helped to form a language for generations which were prepared to speak, and to listen, in public.

There are, of course, three main divisions of Dryden's verse, apart from the verse of the heroic plays: the satires, the songs, and the translations. Now one of the good offices of Dryden in his satires is this: to show us that if verse should not stray too far from the customs of speech, so also it should not abandon too much the uses of prose. Everyone knows the verses of *Mac Flecknoe* and the more varied if less sustained satire of *Absalom and Achitophel*;[11] I should like here to mention rather those two pieces of sustained reasoning in verse, *Religio Laici* and *The Hind and the Panther*. Here are two poems which could no more have been written in the eighteenth century than in the nineteenth, for they are poems of religious controversy.[12] Other poets, before Dryden, had, in divers fashions, philosophised in verse: Chapman, and Sir John Davies, and Donne, in his way, in *The Progress of the Soul*.[13] But in *The Hind and the Panther* for the first time and for the last is political-religious controversy elevated to the condition of poetry. However one views these differences now, one cannot but appreciate the characterisation of the Church of England, under the guise of the Panther, which Dryden draws, after his conversion to Rome:

> Thus, like a creature of a double kind,
> In her own labyrinth she lives confined.
> To foreign lands no sound of her is come,
> Humbly content to be despised at home.
> Such is her faith, where good cannot be had,
> At least she leaves the refuse of the bad.
> Nice in her choice of ill, though not of best,
> And least deform'd, because reform'd the least . . .
> A real presence all her sons allow,
> And yet 'tis flat idolatry to bow,
> Because the Godhead's there they know not how . . .
> What is't those faithful then partake or leave?
> For what is signified and understood,
> Is, by her own confession, flesh and blood.
> Then, by the same acknowledgment, we know
> They take the sign, and take the substance too.
> The lit'ral sense is hard to flesh and blood,
> But nonsense never can be understood.[14]

This is not, when analysed, convincing theological argument – Dryden was no theologian – but it is first-rate oratorical persuasion; and Dryden was the first man to raise oratory to the dignity of poetry, and to descend with poetry to teach the arts of oratory; and to do any one thing with verse better than anyone else has done it, at the same time that one is the first to attempt it, is no small achievement. But it is not only by biting passages like this that a poem of Dryden's succeeds, but by a perfect lifting and lowering of his flight, in a varied unity without monotony. Take the beginning of the earlier and inferior of the two poems, *Religio Laici*, the passage attacking the principles of deism:

> Dim, as the borrowed beams of moon and stars
> To lonely, weary, wandering travellers
> Is Reason to the soul: and as on high
> Those rowling fires discover but the sky,
> Not light us here, so Reason's glimmering ray
> Was lent, not to assure our doubtful way,
> But guide us upward to a better day.
> And as those nightly tapers disappear
> When day's bright lord ascends our hemisphere,
> So pale grows Reason at Religion's sight,
> So dies, and so dissolves in supernatural light.[15]

This, if I am not greatly mistaken, is first-rate poetry not incomparable to Lucretius – of whom, by the way, Dryden by a few passages proved himself the most worthy translator into English of any time.[16] And the same vein is repeated, with still greater power, in *The Hind and the Panther*:

> But, gracious God, how well dost thou provide
> For erring judgements an unerring guide!
> Thy throne is darkness in the abyss of light,
> A blaze of glory that forbids the sight;
> O teach me to believe Thee thus concealed,
> And search no farther than Thyself revealed;
> But her alone for my director take
> Whom Thou hast promised never to forsake!
> My thoughtless youth was winged with vain desires,
> My manhood, long misled by wandering fires,
> Followed false lights; and when their glimpse was gone,
> My pride struck out new sparkles of her own.
> Such was I, such by nature still I am,
> Be Thine the glory, and be mine the shame![17]

Anyone who to-day could make such an exact statement in verse of such nobility and elegance, and with such originality of versification and language, might well look down upon his contemporaries. We are very far, here, from the smoothness of Waller or Denham. The surface is equally polished; but the difference is between the smooth surface of a piece of sculpture conceived and finished by a master and the smooth surface of a cake of soap.

I shall have occasion to refer again to Dryden's verse translations, including his translations from Chaucer, in connection with his literary criticism. I will only say here that they are more or less satisfactory, naturally, according to Dryden's sympathy with the original, and that perhaps his translations from Lucretius are the most inspired. All are of the best workmanship. Their importance, however, in considering Dryden's place then and now, is this: that it was by his translations almost as much as by his original poems, that Dryden helped to form our modern English tongue. It is no inconsiderable service to a language, to demonstrate that great poetry of other languages and times can be translated into the speech which we use daily, and remain great poetry. It might be a good thing for the language of to-day if living poets would devote more attention to translating poetry from both living languages and dead; for the language at Dryden's time it was of vital assistance. Nor shall I now say much about, or quote from, Dryden's lyrical verse. Whatever we think of the *Song for St. Cecilia's Day* or of *Alexander's Feast* we must remember that in these Dryden perfected a form used with less skill by Cowley, and bequeathed it to Gray, Collins, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Tennyson; and without Dryden the *Intimations of Immortality* could not have been written.[18]

The main point, which I wish to drive home, about Dryden is this: that it was Dryden who for the first time, and so far as we are concerned, for all time, established a *normal* English speech, a speech valid for both verse and prose, and imposing its laws which greater than Dryden's might violate, but which no poetry since has overthrown. The English language as left by Shakespeare, and within much narrower limits, by Milton, was a language like the club of Hercules, which no lesser strength could wield;[19] so I believe that the language after Shakespeare and Milton could only have deteriorated until some genius appeared as great as they – or indeed, greater than they: for the language would have been quickly in far worse case than that in which Shakespeare found it. It was Dryden, more than any other individual, who formed a language possible for the mediocrity, and yet possible for later great writers to do great things with.

And what Dryden accomplished was no by-product and no accident. Never was there a worker more conscious of what he was attempting. His theories, as we shall see, were all theories directed to what the poet could *consciously* attempt. Coleridge, in his writings on poetry, far exceeds the limited flight of Dryden, and disappears in metaphysic clouds. The theory of Coleridge is partly, certainly, as was that of Wordsworth, a defence of his conscious precepts of workmanship; but with Wordsworth, and still more with Coleridge, we can say that their theory does not wholly account for the best of their poetry.[20] In this way, Dryden was a far more *conscious* poet than either; perhaps more conscious than any poet of great eminence since. His essays are his conscious thoughts about the kinds of work he was doing; he uttered no metaphysical speculations, he was no prophet or teacher. I can think of no man in literature whose aims are so exactly fulfilled by his performance; and in the whole vineyard no labourer who more deserved his hire.

So I think now that we can understand a little better why John Dryden, of whose personality we know little, except to know that there was little that was romantic or eccentric about it, should have dominated his time. Even if this portly country gentleman had sat hour after hour at Wills's, as silent as Addison's description of himself as Mr. Spectator, it is perfectly intelligible.[21] It is hardly too much to say that Dryden found the English speechless, and he gave them speech; and they accordingly acknowledged their master; the language which we can refine, enrich, distort or corrupt as we say, but which we cannot do without.[22] No one, in the whole history of English literature, has dominated that literature so long, or so completely. And even in the nineteenth century the language was still the language of Dryden, as it is to-day. In two hundred odd years, or exactly three hundred years from his birth, hardly a word or a phrase has become quaint or obsolete.[23] And yet the man who accomplished so much, and accomplished it so consciously, was content to do whatever came to hand; and for twenty years of his life occupied himself exclusively in order to make his living with a form of literature to which his talent was little suited, and that form too he transformed.

NOTES

1. As printed in *John Dryden: The Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic* (New York: Terence & Elsa Holliday, 1932) [5-24]; originally broadcast at 5 p.m. on Sunday, 12 Apr 1931, as TSE's first talk in a series of three weekly lectures on John Dryden and subsequently published in abbreviated form as "John Dryden – I. The Poet Who Gave the English Speech," *The Listener*, 5 (15 Apr 1931), 621-22. TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

On 6 Feb 1931, TSE informed his brother, Henry, that he had "just signed on for three radio talks on Dryden – I wish they would get away from such subjects as Donne and Dryden – in May, which is a waste of time except from a financial point of view" (*L5* 479). On 6 Apr, TSE wrote to Ernest Rhys to say that he was giving the Dryden broadcasts "solely from mercenary motives . . . That is difficult only for the reason that I have already said all I have to say about the subject" (*L5* 535). In the summer of 1932, TSE negotiated through his agent David Higham the sale of these talks to the New York Holliday Bookshop. Since his BBC contract assigned "sole right of publication in Great Britain," TSE stipulated that the book could not be exported to the UK; ordinary and signed copies were published simultaneously on 18 Oct. This is the only American edition of TSE's prose used as copy text as there was no UK edition.

The opening paragraph of the broadcast was deleted upon publication in the *Listener* and in *John Dryden*:

I do not propose, in these three talks, to attempt to demonstrate that John Dryden was a great poet, a great dramatist, and a great critic. I shall take all that for granted. What I shall do if I can is to show that all his activities were only one activity, and to show that his greatness for his own time is also his greatness three hundred years after he was born; to appraise the debt of gratitude which we to-day owe him – and which we owe him whether we have read his poetry or not, and whether we can enjoy it or not. For he is one of those writers to whom we are indebted for the language in which we must think and feel.

2. Dryden was born into a puritan gentry family in rural Northamptonshire. In Dec 1663, he married Lady Elizabeth Howard, daughter of the earl of Berkshire. According to Alexander Pope, "It was Dryden who made Will's coffee-house the great resort for the wits of his time." Reported in Joseph Spence, *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters, of Books and Men* (London: John Murray, 1820), 113.

3. Jonson told William Drummond that "at his first communion, in token of true reconciliation, he drank out all the full cup of wine." *Notes of Ben Jonson's Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden* (London: Shakespeare Society, 1842), 22.

4. For TSE's discussion of Cleveland and Benlowes, see "The Minor Metaphysicals: From Cowley to Dryden" (1930) (4.110). In *An Essay of Dramatic Poesy* (1668), Dryden disparages "Clevelandism" as "wresting or torturing a word into another meaning," adding that "we cannot read a verse of Cleveland's without making a face at it, as if every word were a pill to swallow." *Dryden's Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (London: Dent, 1912), 7, 21.

5. In "John Dryden" (1921), TSE quotes William Hazlitt's observation that: "Dryden and Pope are the great masters of the artificial style of poetry of our language" (2.354).

6. In "A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (1693), Dryden recalled "the darling of my youth, the famous Cowley." *Essays of John Dryden*, vol 2, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon, 1926), 108.

7. In "The Minor Metaphysicals: From Cowley to Dryden" (1930), TSE observes of Dryden's predecessors: "The three most important are Denham, Waller and Oldham; all of them specialists in the heroic or ten-syllabic iambic couplet" (4.114).

8. "Waller was smooth but Dryden taught to join / The varying verse, the full-resounding line, / The long majestic march, and energy divine." "The First Epistle of the Second Book of Horace" (1737), *The Works of Alexander Pope*, vol 4 (London: Longman, 1847), 465.

9. In his introduction to *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), TSE comments on the decline of Caroline dramatic verse: "as for Ford and Shirley, I suspect them of belonging to that class of poets not unknown to any age, which has all of the superficial qualities, and none of the internal organs, of poetry" (4.146-47).

10. Ariel's song "Full fathom five thy father lies," *The Tempest* I.ii.397ff. TSE alludes to this favorite passage from Shakespeare in *The Waste Land*.

11. For TSE's reflections on *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681) and *Mac Flecknoe* (1682), see "John Dryden" (1921) (2.351-52).

12. In *Religio Laici; or, A Laymans Faith* (1682), Dryden defends the middle way of the Anglican Church; in *The Hind and the Panther* (1687), he defends the Roman Catholic Church against Anglican persecution.

13. For TSE's extended discussions of Davies as a philosophical poet, see "Sir John Davies" (1926) (2.860) and of Donne's "Of the Progresse of the Soule: The Second Anniversary" (1612), see his fourth Clark lecture, "The Conceit in Donne" (2.679-80).

14. *The Hind and the Panther* ll. 402-09, 414-16, 423-29. *The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. John Sargeaunt (London: Oxford UP, 1910), 122-23. TSE modernizes the spelling of this and all subsequent quotations from his edition of Dryden's poetry.

15. *Religio Laici* ll. 1-11 *The Poems of John Dryden*, 99. deism (OED): "The distinctive doctrine or belief of a deist; usually, belief in the existence of a Supreme Being as the source of finite existence, with rejection of revelation and the supernatural doctrines of Christianity; 'natural religion'"

16. Dryden translated passages from the second and third books of Lucretius's *De rerum natura* in *Sylvae* (1685), although in the preface he warns against Lucretius's Epicurean doctrines.

17. *The Hind and the Panther* ll. 64-77. *The Poems of John Dryden*, 118-19.

18. TSE discusses "A Song for St. Cecilia's Day" (1687) and "Alexander's Feast" (1697) in "John Dryden" (1930) (4.123). Dryden's odes created a fashion for celebrating St. Cecilia's Day (Nov 22) with poems set to music and led more generally to the development of the ode in English poetry of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

19. Hercules or Heracles is a Greek mythological hero often depicted wielding an olive-wood club.

20. On 9 Dec 1932, TSE examined the prose criticism of Coleridge and Wordsworth at length in his fourth Norton lecture (4.625). Wordsworth remarked that "every author, as far as he is great and at the same time original, has had the task of creating the taste by which he is to be enjoyed." *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (Philadelphia: James Kay, 1837), 493.

21. Addison established the persona of "Mr. Spectator," a cultured and detached observer of London society, in his critical essays for *The Spectator* (1711-12). Joseph Spence testified that "Addison passed each day alike, and much in the manner that Dryden did. Dryden employed his mornings in writing, dined *en famille*, and then went to Will's; only he came home earlier a' nights." *Observations, Anecdotes, and Characters, of Books and Men*, 155.

22. TSE echoes Samuel Johnson's remark on Dryden's "refinement of our language" in his "Life of Dryden" (1779): "He found it brick and he left it marble" (*Lives*, 187).

23. TSE's broadcast was published in the *Listener* under the rubric: "*Mr. Eliot, author of 'Homage to John Dryden', offers a revaluation of the work and influence of the poet whose tercentenary is being celebrated this summer*" (621). Dryden was born on 9 Aug 1631.

Dryden the Dramatist[1]

It is not such an easy matter to explain the utility to English letters and civilisation of Dryden's dramatic work, as it is to persuade of the importance of his poetry. Here are, in the edition of 1735 which I have, six volumes of miscellaneous plays, the chief product of twenty years of his life: it would be in a modern edition one fairly stout volume.[2] The point is: are we to consider these plays as merely the by-product or waste-product of a man of genius, or as the brilliant effort to establish an impossible cause, or have they, perhaps, any important relation to the development of English literature? Would Dryden be as important as he is, would he have accomplished just as much as he did, if he had never written these plays at all; plays, one or two of which a small number of people to-day have had the opportunity of seeing on the stage, and three or four of which a rather larger number of people have read?

We begin, all of us, with every prejudice against Dryden's "heroic drama."[3] There is one great play in blank verse, *All for Love*, and the difficulty about that is that Shakespeare's play on the same subject, *Antony and Cleopatra*, is very much greater – though not necessarily a much finer *play*. There are several fine plays in rhymed couplets, of which there is none better than *The Conquest of Granada*, and the trouble with them is that they are not in blank verse.[4] It is extraordinarily difficult not to apply to these plays irrelevant standards of criticism, and standards, moreover, which are not exactly of play-writing or even of verse-making. We have always at the back of our minds a comparison which is not in kind. Most of us prefer the reading, not only of Shakespeare, but of several other Elizabethan dramatists to that of Dryden. And in our reading of Elizabethan plays, we are inclined to confer upon them the dramatic virtues of the most actable (on the modern stage) of Shakespeare's plays, because they have some of the *reading* virtues of these and the rest of Shakespeare's plays. I shall not venture here to investigate the nature of the *dramatic* in poetic drama, as distinguishable from the *poetic* in poetic drama; only to point out that the problem is much more of a tangle than it looks. For instance, there is *that which expressed in word and action is effective on the stage without our having read the text before*: that might be called the *theatrically dramatic*; and there is also the "poetically dramatic," that which, when we read it, we recognize to have dramatic value, but which would not have dramatic value for us upon the stage unless we had already the perception of it from reading. *Theatrically* dramatic value in verse exists when the speech has its equivalent in, or can be projected by, the action and gesture and expression[5†] of the actor; *poetic* dramatic value is something dramatic in essence which can only be expressed by the word and by the reception of the word.

Shakespeare, of course, made the utmost use of each value; and therefore confuses us in our attempt to estimate between the minor Elizabethans and Dryden; for neither they nor Dryden had such vast resources. But to make my point a little clearer I will take parallel passages from *Antony and Cleopatra* and from *All for Love*. In the former play, when the soldiers burst in after Cleopatra's death Charmian is made to say

> It is well done, and fitting for a princess
> Descended of so many royal kings.
> Ah, soldier! (*dies*).[6]

Dryden's Charmion says:

> Yes, 'tis well done, and like a Queen, the last
> Of her great race. I follow her.
> (*Sinks down and dies*).[7]

Now, if you take these two passages by themselves, you cannot say that the two lines of Dryden are either less *poetic* than Shakespeare's, or less *dramatic*; a great actress could make just as much, I believe, of those of Dryden as of those of Shakespeare. But consider Shakespeare's remarkable addition to the original text of North, the two plain words, *ah, soldier*.[8] You cannot say that there is anything peculiarly *poetic* about these two words, and if you isolate the dramatic from the poetic, you cannot say that there is anything peculiarly dramatic either, because there is nothing in them for the actress to express in action; she can at best enunciate them clearly. I could not myself put into words the difference I feel between the passage if these two words *ah, soldier* were omitted and with them. But I know there is a difference, and that only Shakespeare could have made it.[9]

One might say that Dryden was a great poet who, by close application of a first rate mind, made himself a great dramatist. His best plays are a happy marriage, or a happy compromise, between poetry and drama. You cannot say, when he is at his best, that he is less dramatic than Shakespeare, often he is more *purely* dramatic; nor can you say that he is less poetic. It is merely that there is a flight above, at which poetry and drama become one thing; of which one is often reminded in passages of Homer or Dante. We often feel with Shakespeare, and now and then with his lesser contemporaries, that the dramatic action on the stage is the symbol and shadow of some more serious action in a world of feeling more real than ours, just as our perceptions, in dreams, are often more ominously weighted than they are in practical waking life. As Chapman says

> That all things to be done, as here we live,
> Are done before all times in the other life.[10]

Here again is a passage, from the dying words of a hero of Chapman, which I will contrast presently with words of a hero of Dryden.

> Here like a Roman statue I will stand
> Till death hath made me marble: oh, my fame,
> Live in despite of murder; take thy wings
> And haste thee where the grey-eyed morn perfumes
> Her rosy chariot with Sabaean spices,
> Fly, where the evening from the Iberian vales
> Takes on her swarthy shoulders Hecate
> Crowned with a grove of oaks: fly where men feel
> The cunning axle-tree: and those that suffer
> Beneath the chariot of the snowy Bear:
> And tell them all that D'Ambois now is hasting
> To the eternal dwellers.[11]

Here is an equally well known purple passage from *All for Love*.

> How I loved
> Witness ye Days and Nights, and all ye Hours.
> That danced away with down upon your feet,
> As all your business were to count my passion.
> One day passed by, and nothing saw but love,
> Another came, and still 'twas only love,
> And suns were wearied out with looking on
> And I untired with loving.
> I saw you every day, and all the day;
> And every day was still but as the first:

So eager was I still to see you more. . . .
   While within your arms I lay,
The world fell mouldering from my hands each hour
And left me scarce a grasp. . . .
   . . . . I knew not that I fled;
But fled to follow you.
– What haste she made to hoist her purple sails![12]

Now, you cannot say that one of these passages, that of Chapman or that of Dryden, is more purple than the other, or better poetry.[13] Both are inferior in that each does to excess one part of what Shakespeare can do. Chapman departs too far from the direct stage action into the second world which the visual symbolises; Dryden is also excessively poetic, or rather too consciously poetic, by lavishing such fine poetry *solely* in the direct action. Chapman has only overtone; and Dryden has none. But if you consider the lines of Dryden solely as poetry, or solely as drama, you cannot find a flaw in them.

As for the verse of *All for Love* and the best of Dryden's blank verse in the other plays in which he used it, it is to me a miracle of revivification. I think that it has more influence than it has had credit for; and that it is really the norm of blank verse for later blank verse playwrights. How Dryden could have escaped so completely the bad influence of the last followers of Shakespeare, with their dissolution of rhythm nearly into prose, and their worn-out wardrobe of imagery, is as wonderful as his superiority to, and difference from, the other schools of verse, that of the Senecal poets, and D'Avenant to whom he was somewhat indebted.[14] I will hazard here an heretical and contestable opinion: that later blank verse dramatists have written better verse when they wrote more like Dryden,[15†] and worse blank verse when they were conscious of Shakespeare. When Shelley wrote in *The Cenci*:

My God! Can it be possible I have
To die so suddenly? So young to go
Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!
To be nailed down into a narrow place;
To see no more sweet sunshine. . . .[16]

I feel that this was not worth doing, because it is only a feeble echo of the tremendous speech of Claudio in *Measure for Measure*;[17] but Shelley is not the only poet who has been Shakespearean by the appropriation of worms and rot and such Elizabethan stage properties. But other lines, such as

worse than despair,
Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope:
It is the only ill which can find place
Upon the giddy, sharp and narrow hour
Tottering beneath us[18]

are more, in their context, like Dryden – though in *The Cenci* resemblances are confused by the nature of the subject, which is more sympathetic to Ford than to either Shakespeare or Dryden.[19] And much more obviously than in the play of Shelley – which I have chosen for mention because it is obviously of Elizabethan model – is the debt to Dryden present in the plays of Byron.

The skill of Dryden's blank verse is all the more admirable when one admits that it is a tour de force: blank verse is not natural to him. We shall see that in one of his critical essays he presents a most able defence of the rhymed couplet in heroic drama; but I always feel that here Dryden found his reasons for what he already believed upon instinct.[20] Just as he had to defend the heroic drama because it happened to be the only form possible for the time, so I suspect that he defended the rhymed couplet because it was the form of verse which came most natural to him. There is not a line in *All for Love* which has, to my ear, the conversational tone of the best of Dryden's satires. As he adapted himself to drama, so he had, as far as possible, to adapt the drama to himself. Not that he was the first or the last to rhyme on the stage. But there is no other poet to whom the couplet came so naturally as the vehicle of speech as it did to Dryden; what he did not do with it cannot be done; and his couplet, miraculously, *is* speech. There are two reasons for the comparative success of his rhyming in drama; first, he regularly relaxed the phrasing and made his lines run on as much as possible, so that they are technically different from his satire, and though still closely packed, less compressed; and of course he helps himself out with broken lines and triplets. The other reason is that he limits himself to those dramatic effects for which the rhymed couplet is adequate. Now the kind of play that he tried to write, and succeeded in writing, was a kind which would have been in existence, whether Dryden had written or not; and as it was there, it is wholly a merit on the part of Dryden to have written that kind of play in rhymed verse. The rhymed plays, such as *The Conquest of*

Granada and *Aurung-Zebe*, would *not* have been such good plays as they are, had they been written in blank verse, even blank verse as good as Dryden's.[21] So that Dryden himself, in defending rhyme in the drama, oversimplifies the problem: for as a particular type of play modifies versification, so the play is in turn modified by the versification.

No one still supposes that Dryden made his plays out of whole cloth on the French pattern. What there is in common, including the Spanish and Oriental themes, can be enumerated. But at the same time we do not always recognise how very different is the *ethos* of either Corneille or Racine from that of Dryden. The order of French tragedy sprang from an origin which has its parallel in the Senecal drama of the Countess of Pembroke's circle, the sort of play that Fulke Greville wrote.[22] I do not think that Dryden's drama has any essential relation to that abortive movement. The great French tragedy is classical in the sense that it is strongly *moral*. Now Dryden's plays are emphatically not "moral" in this way; they are diversified, certainly, with fine, if not very profound, *moralising*, but that is not at all the same thing. The Elizabethan tragedy was not moral either, as the French was; but Shakespeare's work as a whole, and some of the best plays of his contemporaries, explore the possibilities of human sin and suffering so profoundly as to give us something more than morals. But with Dryden I am afraid you get something less; he is a moralist only in speeches, not in plot; and the rest is a pageantry of humanity in heroic roles. And so I think that the true antecedent of Dryden is to be found in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher. There is a similar exploitation of stage effect, the same dependence upon the strained situation for its immediate dramatic effectiveness. I cannot myself see any striking[23†] resemblance between the plays of Shakespeare's last period and the work of Beaumont and Fletcher; but the resemblance between *A King and No King* and *Don Sebastian* in their ethos is obvious. And if I am right in drawing this comparison, then it may be allowed that Dryden came at the right time, and that he did well to substitute for the enervated Jacobean blank verse of Fletcher[24†] his firm and masculine couplet.[25]

We must call Dryden's plays "heroic drama" because we certainly cannot call them tragedy. Even though he kills people off at the end, and though a dying queen raves in couplets better than one would conceive it possible for rhymed couplets to rave, what Dryden has is not the sense of tragedy at all. Indeed, it is from one point of view ironic to call these plays even "heroic"; for though he does not introduce the comic scene, some of his most effective passages are in a tone of witty satire, and are those in which the protagonists appear least heroic. For Dryden is an observer of human nature, rather than a creator.

I suspect that when Dryden regretted his efforts in comedy he was not merely deploring their licentiousness, which seems pretty innocent fun nowadays, but less consciously admitting their defects. Everything else that Dryden attempted, he brought to perfection in its kind, but in comedy he is a crude precursor of Congreve, and less admirable than Wycherley at his best. His is the Restoration world, certainly, not that of the simple Elizabethan humours; but his most polished figures of comedy are, compared to the finest Restoration comedy, almost bumpkins; that delightful lady of *Marriage à la Mode*, Melantha, is still too "humorous" in her French affectations; and the fun of *Mr. Limberham* is not altogether well-bred.[26] What I think is most noticeable, however, is that in his comedies Dryden was not able to bring his prose to perfection; it is a transition prose; and I doubt anyway whether his heart was in it. Dryden was quick enough to recognise the real right thing in prose dialogue;[27] when young Mr. Congreve came along no one extolled him more highly than the older master of English letters. Congreve's prose is truly what we ordinarily[28†] call poetic; at any rate, I believe that the only two dramatists who have ever attained perfect prose in comedy – meaning perfect prose *for* comedy – are Shakespeare and Congreve.[29]

But Dryden was not *naturally* a dramatist, as Shakespeare and Congreve were natural dramatists. His direct service to English drama is – apart from the value of his plays themselves – but here I am estimating the obligation of later times to Dryden, and not Dryden himself – his direct service is largely negative: had he not developed his own form of heroic play, which was suited to, and representative of his time, it is likely that a more and more etiolated Jacobeanism, with decayed versification, would have lingered on. His great service to the drama is merely incidental to his service to English letters.

We are apt to think, for convenience, and to forget that it is merely a convenience, of the development of prose and the development of verse as two parallel currents which never mingle. But Dryden's verse, for example, affects the history of English prose almost as much as his prose does.[30] I have suggested that it is a bad sign when the written language and the spoken language drift too far apart. It is also bad when poetry and prose are too far apart; certainly, a poet can learn essential knowledge from the study of the best prose, and a prose writer can learn from the study of the best verse; for there are problems of expression common to both. But for Dryden's verse, we might not have had the perfection of Congreve's prose: though this is not demonstrable. Prose which has *nothing* in common with verse is dead; verse which has nothing in common with prose is probably artificial, false, diffuse, and syntactically weak. We commonly find versifiers who are prosaic, and prose writers who dress out their flat writing with withered flowers of poetic rhetoric, and this is just the opposite of what I have in mind. I do not believe that in any modern civilisation prose can flourish if all the verse being written is bad, or that good verse can be written in an atmosphere choked with bad prose. If I am right, the beneficent influence of Dryden's poetry cannot be confined to those poets his disciples, but is diffused over the whole of English thought and expression.

I cannot, finally, pretend to demonstrate that Dryden had a beneficent influence on English tragic drama – but only for the reason that since Dryden there has been no English tragic drama to influence. I have tried to affirm a belief, at least, that Dryden's dramatic work has, besides the pleasure it can give us for its merits unique in English literature, importance in the following ways: first, I believe that it strengthened his command of his verse medium for other work, and enlarged his interests; then, because of its interest for his own time, and because of the importance of the theatre in his time, it helped to consolidate his influence upon his contemporaries and successors; and it is an essential member of the body of his work, which must be taken as a whole; and lastly, because it gave him the knowledge and the opportunity for some of his best critical writing – which last, as I shall try to show, has been of enduring value.[31]

NOTES

1. As printed in *John Dryden: The Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic* (New York: Terence & Elsa Holliday, 1932) [27-45]; originally broadcast at 5 p.m. on Sunday, 19 Apr 1931, as TSE's second talk in a series of three weekly lectures on John Dryden and subsequently published in abbreviated form as "John Dryden – II. Dryden the Dramatist," *The Listener*, 5 (22 Apr 1931), 681-82. TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

2. *The Dramatick Works of John Dryden, Esq; in Six Volumes* (London: Jacob Tonson, 1735). Hereafter *Dramatick Works*.

3. TSE marked the following passage from Dryden's essay "Of Heroic Plays" (1672) in his copy of *Dryden's Dramatic Essays*: "an heroic play ought to be an imitation, in little, of an heroic poem; and consequently . . . love and valour ought to be the subject of it" (London: Dent, 1912, 89).

4. Dryden's *All for Love; or, The World Well Lost* (1678) borrows freely from Shakespeare's *Antony and Cleopatra* (1623). In his preface to *All for Love*, Dryden justifies his decision to use blank verse – "In my style, I have professed to imitate the divine Shakespeare" (*Dryden's Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* [London: Dent, 1912], 125) – unlike *The Conquest of Granada* (1672), a two-part tragedy, which was composed in his usual heroic couplets.

5†. In *Listener*: "the action and gesture, expression and voice"

6. *Antony and Cleopatra* V.ii.325-27

7. *All for Love* V.511-12 (*Dramatick Works*, vol 4, 83)

8. In his comparison of Shakespeare's and Dryden's treatment of this scene in *Restoration Tragedy, 1660-1720*, Bonamy Dobrée quotes the relevant lines from North's translation of Plutarch: "'Is that well done, Charmion?' 'Very well', said she again, 'and meet for a princess descended from the race of so many royal kings.' She said no more, but fell down dead hard by the bed" (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929, 80). On 16 Apr 1931, TSE wrote to Dobrée that in his forthcoming broadcast on "Dryden the Dramatist": "I shall make much use of you without acknowledgement . . . why should I revive my memory of texts and re-form my own opinions, when I have *Restoration Tragedy* at hand?" (*L5* 549)

9. TSE's judgment reverses Dobrée's evaluation of these passages: "In Charmion's last speech it would seem that Dryden has the advantage, simply because of the more measured and restrained flow of his verse" (*Restoration Tragedy*, 81).

10. Taken from Clermont's dying speech in *The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* V.i.326-27; TSE quotes from his Mermaid edition of *George Chapman*, ed. William Lyon Phelps (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1904).

11. Bussy's final speech in *Bussy D'Ambois*, V.iv.96-107 (*George Chapman* 217). TSE discusses the significance of this favorite passage in his concluding Norton lecture (4.687).

12. *All for Love* II. 282-91; 295-97, 312-14 (*Dramatick Works*, vol 4, 30). In "John Dryden" (1921), TSE quotes the first two passages spoken by Antony, commenting that the lines are taken from "Dryden's best play, and this is perhaps the highest reach" (2.357).

13. "purple passage" or "purple patch" (OED): "an elaborate or excessively ornate passage in a literary composition" [named after Horace's Latin phrase *purpureus pannus*]

14. In "John Dryden" (1930), TSE says that Dryden's "arrival was no sudden avatar" and that his way was prepared by several figures, including "by Davenant in drama" (4.128). Dryden collaborated with Davenant on an adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, performed in 1667 and published in 1670.

15†. In *Listener*: "(whether they were aware of it or not)"

16. *The Cenci* (1819), V.iv.48-52. On 23 Aug 1927, TSE complained to J. M. Robertson that: "*The Cenci* has always seemed to me a third-rate pastiche of a second-rate Beaumont and Fletcher play; it is often praised by people who would like to be able to say something for Shelley but cannot praise anything else" (*L3* 654). TSE reiterated the point in a letter to Dobrée of 9 Jan 1938: "Why is it that the versification of *The Cenci* etc. ought to be as good as minor Jacobean tragedy and actually is as the worst margarine to bad butter?"

17. TSE refers to Claudio's speech expressing his fear of death: "Ay, but to die, and go we know not where; / To lie in cold obstruction and to rot" (*Measure for Measure* III.i.121-35).

18. *The Cenci* V.iv.97-101

19. Shelley based the melodramatic plot of *The Cenci* on the true story of Beatrice Cenci's trial in Rome in 1599 for the murder of her father. Shelley refers to John Ford – whose plays dealt with similar subject matter of murder and incest – in the Preface to *The Revolt of Islam* (1817).

20. TSE alludes to F. H. Bradley's statement that "metaphysics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct; but to find these reasons is no less an instinct." *Appearance and Reality* (London: Swan Sonnenschein, 1908), xiv.

21. In "John Dryden" (1921), TSE quotes dialogue from *Aurung-Zebe* (1676) as "admirable purple comedy" (2.357).

22. TSE discusses the role of the Countess of Pembroke's circle (including Sidney and Greville) on the development of Elizabethan criticism in the first of his Norton lectures (4.597).

23†. In *Listener*: "fundamental"

24†. In *Listener*: "Beaumont and Fletcher"

25. Dryden praised Beaumont and Fletcher's tragicomedy *A King and No King* (1619) in his essay "Of Dramatick Poetry" (1668). His own *Don Sebastian* (1691) similarly mixes a comic subplot with more serious political and sexual themes.

26. TSE is indebted to Dobrée's study of Restoration Comedy, in which Dryden's *Marriage à la Mode* (1673) is measured against the comedies of Congreve and Wycherley, and in which the fashionable but mannered Melantha is described as "the Frenchified feminine fop, who haunts the court." *Restoration Comedy, 1660-1720* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1924), 113. Although *Mr. Limberham* (1678) was taken off the London stage for indecency, in his "A Dialogue of Dramatic Poetry" (1928), written in imitation of Dryden's critical dialogues, one of TSE's speakers says that the "moral attitude" of this play is "impeccable" (3.399).

27. TSE alludes to the title of Henry James's short story "The Real Right Thing" (1899). In "Dante" (1929), TSE extols "the real right thing, the power of establishing relations between beauty of the most diverse sorts; it is the utmost power of the poet" (3.726).

28†. In *Listener*: "but confusingly"

29. TSE follows Dryden himself who coupled Congreve's dramatic greatness with Shakespeare: "Heaven, that but once was prodigal before, / To Shakespeare gave as much; she could not give him more." "To my Dear Friend Mr. Congreve" (1694) ll. 62-63 (*The Poems of John Dryden*, ed. John Sargeaunt, London: Oxford UP, 1910, 167).

30. In a letter to Dobrée of 18 Apr 1931 after his first broadcast, TSE asserts: "I do not, I believe, exaggerate Dryden's influence on prose by his *prose* (which of course does fall in with what other people were doing) but that I hold an undemonstrable theory that he influenced prose as well as verse by his *verse*. His prose is of capital importance in the history of criticism, but not, I think, in the history of prose" (*L5* 555).

31. In *John Dryden*, the essay ended here; the following paragraph concluded the version published in *Listener*:

But possibly, if serious poetic drama is ever again written, and I believe that it will be, Dryden's plays may have another service to perform. The few civilisations which have contributed essential types of poetic drama to the world's literature have none of them succeeded in producing more than one type apiece, and that usually has been perfected within a short space of time. In England there has been the late mediaeval drama of which the consummate example is *Everyman*, the Elizabethan drama, and the third, so different from the Elizabethan as to be a distinct type, that of Dryden. Dryden as a dramatist has his antecedents and derivations, like everyone else; he has his limitations, narrower than those of the best of Shakespeare's contemporaries; but no dramatist has ever come nearer to creating a dramatic type by his own solitary exertions. With so much variety, why should there not still be more? And any poet who had the ambitious design of writing a verse play would do well to saturate himself in all three kinds of English drama – he will have a better chance of writing something which will be not a pastiche of any, but different from all.

Dryden the Critic[1]

The prose writings of Dryden, whether in the standard edition of W. P. Ker, or in the convenient "Everyman" edition, consist entirely of prefaces to various volumes of verse or verse plays.[2] For the most part, they are concerned either with his views on poetic drama, or with his views on the art of translation. They are occasional, and constitute a kind of commentary on what he was doing in verse; they are the notes of a practitioner. They are obviously important in two ways: in the history of the development of English prose style, and in the history of English criticism; they are of further importance to us here, in reckoning the importance of the whole work of Dryden; for they form a part of this whole work which cannot be neglected.

Dryden's Essays are first, important in the history of English prose. As I have said, Dryden's verse exercised the most vital influence on English poetry for nearly a century; similarly, his prose had a temporary, and has a permanent, value for English critical prose style; but the great influence of Dryden cannot be divided into two currents; his main influence was upon the matter of thought and feeling, out of which both verse and prose are made; his own verse and prose can therefore not be wholly separated, though we may say that he probably influenced prose by his verse still more than by his prose. I mean, that if we consider him as a writer of critical prose alone, we cannot say that his influence was dominant.[3] We find similar tendencies in style in other contemporary writers on other subjects; and no one could go so far as to maintain that but for Dryden, we should have had neither the essays of Addison nor the writings of Swift at the point of perfection which these two writers reached. One can more plausibly conjecture, that but for the criticism of Dryden, we might not have had Addison's critical essays on Milton or on the ballads; for Dryden was positively the first master of English criticism; and he set a good example for critics by practising what he preached.[4]

In Dryden's prose style, we find no such painful development as we find in his verse. His prose seems to spring spontaneously, perfectly modelled. There is nothing surprising about this; it would be surprising if Dryden had not written good prose. Anyone who has studied his poetry, from his crude beginnings to his perfect accomplishment, must be aware that Dryden was gradually acquiring those elements of good writing which are fundamental to both verse and prose, whilst he was freeing himself from the artificial poeticality of the previous age. His training in verse was training in prose as well; so that when, in maturity, he set himself, after the example of Corneille, to writing critical introductions to his own verse, his prose style is perfectly finished – indeed, more supple[5†] than the prose style of Corneille himself.[6] I have conceded that Dryden's prose is only one of the prose styles of his time that went to the formation of our form of classic English prose; but among these styles it is certainly one of the most admirable. He has all the virtues you would expect. He neither descends too low, nor attempts to fly too high; he is perfectly clear as to what he has to say; and he says it always with the right control and changes of intensity of feeling. His wit exceeds that of all his contemporaries; it contributes elegance and liveliness of figure, without ever overreaching itself into facetiousness. He has not the passion of his cousin Swift;[7] but he everywhere convinces us of the serious, singleminded integrity of his love of truth in poetry, and in his contempt for shams; and no writer in the next and more polished generation, not even Addison, has more urbanity. "Elegance" and "urbanity"; two words of commendation which have long been in disrepute; but which are always needed.

I know of no finer example of the precision and also of the range of Dryden's prose style, than the essay which we usually read first: the *Essay of Dramatic Poesy*.[8] It may seem an absurd and unjust comparison, but I can think of no essay in dialogue form in English, which on its own plane – less sublime, less profound in thought – compares more favourably with some of the dialogues of Plato: it reminds me, at the beginning particularly, of the beautiful introduction to the *Theaetetus*.[9] "It was that memorable day, in the first summer of the late war, when our navy engaged the Dutch." No one who has ever read it can forget the undertone of naval cannonading above which are raised the voices of Eugenius, Crites, Neander and Lisideius as they discuss in their barge on the river the various practices of Greek, French and English drama, the merits of the several tragic writers, and the claims of blank and rhymed verse.[10] And here, and in all his prose, Dryden is, as in his verse, in perfect training; there is nowhere an ounce of superfluous fat; he is neither anaemic nor apoplectic; every blow delivered has just the right force behind it. When we read such memorable phrases as these from his essay *Examen Poeticum*:

> The same parts and application which have made me a poet might have raised me to any honours of the gown, which are often given to men of as little learning and less honesty than myself. No Government has ever been, or ever can be, wherein timeservers and blockheads will not be uppermost. The persons are only changed, but the same jugglings in State, the same hypocrisy in religion, the same self-interest and mismanagement, will remain for ever. Blood and money will be lavished in all ages only for the preferment of new faces and old consciences.[11]

Who, reading such passages, cannot understand at once that they should be by the author of *Absalom and Achitophel*, and who could doubt that their author, had he set himself the task, might have been one of the greatest of political orators?[12]

But to turn from the manner to the matter of these prefaces, we observe first that they are the first serious literary criticism in English by an English poet. We cannot quite say the first serious criticism, because there is for instance the contemporary criticism of Thomas Rymer – a critic of whom Dryden speaks highly, and of whom, had I time and place, I should be tempted to speak more highly still.[13] But Dryden was the first poet to theorise, on any large scale, about his own craft. I say on any large scale. There had been criticism in the previous age; but the only one I know, which has any precise and permanent value, is the admirable short treatise of Campion on metre and quantity – unless one except the reply to it by Daniel, and the graceful but ineffectual skirmishing of Philip Sidney.[14] Dryden had, certainly, the example of the prefaces of Corneille in French, to which he was clearly indebted. But Dryden has proved a more important critic for the English language than was Corneille for the French. Rapin and Bossu, to whom Dryden refers, were more important in France than their colleagues in England; it is possible that France has had too many critics of poetry who could not practise it, and England too many poets who were not self-critical; but in Dryden we have, considering his limitation by his own time, an almost ideal balance between the critic and the creative poet.[15]

And as for his limitations of taste by his own time – I should be glad if I could be sure that I or any critic to-day was as catholic in taste, or had such justification for his limitations. It would seem nowadays a futile pastime, for instance, to turn Chaucer into modern English. But for Dryden's time it was no more futile than it would be nowadays, to paraphrase such a thing as *Gawain and the Green Knight*, or even Anglo-Saxon.[16] For one point, Chaucer was then a neglected and unappreciated author; Dryden was not, any more than most of his contemporaries, a scholarly student of middle English; and it shows great perceptiveness on his part to have recognized Chaucer and praised him as he did.[17] Furthermore, Dryden could not consider the English language, as we very foolishly and lazily are inclined to do, as finished and complete; he was in the thick of the struggle to modernise it. We must keep in mind this latter point, when we read his strictures upon the Elizabethans, and especially upon Shakespeare. Possibly, in retrospect, we are right in thinking that he somewhat exaggerates the worth of Fletcher, relative to Shakespeare. But take his comments upon Shakespeare one by one, and you will find, I believe, that most of them are just. We are so habituated to considering Shakespeare above criticism, that we cannot admit that Dryden's praise of Shakespeare is as high praise as our own; and that if we stop to apprehend the values which were rightly important for Dryden in his time, his occasional censure of Shakespeare is usually right.[18]

It is natural that, with the French theory and practice in view, and with the imperfect knowledge of the Greek theatre, and of the meaning of Aristotle's comments upon it, current at the time, Dryden should often have gone wrong in his dramatic criticism. Owing to thus abusing the sense of Aristotle's *Poetics*, many men have erred in trying to erect a final theory of what the theatre ought to be and must be from what it has been. We must not look to Dryden's theories for the genesis of Dryden's practice in the theatre; rather, we find a theory which is a compromise between Aristotle, as he understood Aristotle through distorting French lenses, and his own practice which is itself a compromise between earlier English practice and French practice. Much, for which he appeals to authority, is merely, in his own practice, the result of a sense of form and order working against the disorderliness of the Elizabethan stage. And it must be admitted that the Elizabethans neglected certain very positive dramatic virtues. We are accustomed, and rightly, to look to Shakespeare for more than dramatic virtues, for a "pattern" of feeling which Dryden could not see, because Dryden was not looking for it but for something else; and, therefore, some of Dryden's criticisms of Shakespeare's later plays appear to us supercilious and shallow.[19] But Shakespeare could play his own mighty music upon any instruments that came to hand; and he was not concerned, consciously, greatly to alter the form which he found ready. But Dryden's common sense, and sense of order, were imperative to him; and we must take his theory largely as a kind of legal justification for what he felt was right.

Dryden first, following the French, misunderstands the Aristotelian theory of the Unities of Time and Place; and then, disapproving of the French strictness (he is a good patriot, and never fails to speak up for English drama against French when the occasion offers), proceeds to qualify it. For instance, he reprehends the attempt to condense the history of twenty-four years into a representation of three hours (one would like to read his critique of *Back to Methuselah*), but approves the representation of twenty-four hours in the same space.[20] What is true is, I think, in practice, that more *unity of poetic feeling* (which is the only unity that matters) can be obtained *as a rule*, with a minimum of difference between times and places. I say *as a rule*, for some actions obviously cannot be represented at all without making great leaps of time or space. Dryden's view, as it stands, is literally absurd; for it would make *Coriolanus* a better play than *Antony and Cleopatra*, solely for the reason that the distance from Rome to Antium is shorter than that from Rome to Egypt.[21] But the rigidity of Dryden's theory must not blind us to the accuracy of Dryden's common sense.

Here and there Dryden goes wrong in ways which it is less easy to pardon. For instance, he speaks of the comic element in Elizabethan tragedy as being employed for what we call "comic relief."[22] No doubt, from the point of view of dramatic effect, this comic element was, for the great majority of the Elizabethan audience, comic *relief*. "Laughter and tears" are still advertised as attractions to some American film or other; and doubtless the Elizabethans liked to sandwich their laughter and tears as much as modern audiences do. But a very little examination of Elizabethan drama, and especially of Shakespeare, will convince us that the comic is not really "relief" at all, but on the contrary, at its best an intensification of the sombreness. The Porter in *Macbeth*, the Gravedigger in *Hamlet*, the Fool in *Lear*, the drunkenness of Lepidus in *Antony and Cleopatra* – there is no "relief" in these; they merely make the horror or tragedy more real by transposing it for a moment from the sublime to the common.[23] But we were wrong if we expected Dryden to perceive this; for it is just the sort of thing he would not have perceived.[24†]

Dryden was not only the first great English poet to set down carefully his theories about the practice of his own art, but he is also, allowing for the limitations of his age, what we may call the *normal* critic. Johnson, in his *Lives of the Poets*, adopts a more particular method; his general views of the nature of poetry, and regulations of the art, occur here and there during the course of biographical critiques of particular poets; Dryden is directly concerned with the proper art of poetry, and his remarks on particular poets occur only as illustrations. Coleridge, in his great disorderly book of criticism, is no safe model for other reasons than mere disorder, for he does not restrain himself to criticism, but runs into philosophy and aesthetics. Wordsworth is occupied, in his fine prefaces to the *Lyrical Ballads*, with defending his own practices, and is not accordingly a model for normal critics of poetry; and Matthew Arnold is too largely concerned with finding the moral lesson.[25] Dryden is concerned neither with appreciation nor with aesthetics. He was fortunate in his age, when philosophical writing was practised in England with a language which had just been developed to the point of expressing adequately abstract ideas, and before writing about poetry had come to mean philosophising about it. It is also fortunate for us to have had a critic who wrote so well and with such authority about poetry, at a time when neither the fundamental nature of the poetic activity nor the social function of poetry, was yet considered the subject matter of literary criticism. As testimony of the clarity of Dryden's expression, and the just sobriety of his theory, I mention an essay called "The Proper Wit of Poetry," and particularly the third paragraph, in which he defines Wit. It will be observed that it does not occur to Dryden to distinguish to the point of isolation the reasoning from the imaginative faculty; it would not have occurred to him that there was or should be anything *irrational* in poetic imagination. He says:

> the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding, of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression.[26]

The distinction between thought and image, and the distinction between the thought and the clothing of it in elocution, are foreign to modern theory of poetry; but I think that these distinctions are safer than many that more recent writers have made; and the part of inspiration (or free association[27†]) and the part of conscious labour are justly kept in place.

A great merit of Dryden as a critic and as a critical influence is that he never transgresses the line beyond which the criticism of poetry become something else. In that happy age it did not occur to him to enquire what poetry was *for*, how it affected the nerves of listeners, how it sublimated the wishes of the poet, whom it should satisfy, and all the other questions which really have nothing to do with poetry as poetry; and the poet was not expected to be either a sibyl or a prophet. The purpose of poetry and drama was to *amuse*; but it was to amuse properly; and the larger forms of poetry should have a moral significance; by exhibiting the thoughts and passions of man through lively image and melodious verse, to edify and to refine the reader and auditor.

I do not know that we have improved upon this conception of the place and function of poetry. I do not pretend that Dryden as a critic is often profound, any more than I make that claim for him as a poet; but the more I consider contemporary reflexion upon poetry, the more thankful I am for what we may call Dryden's critical orthodoxy. In his opinions there is no extravagance. Now it seems to me that there is a very widespread tendency, which takes various forms nowadays, to treat poetry as a kind of religion or substitute for religion. The germ, or something more developed than the germ, of this way of thinking is to be found in the criticism of Matthew Arnold, who is that extent an heresiarch. Arnold dismisses altogether the intellectual element in religion, and leaves only art and morals; art, and particularly literary art, inculcates morals, and truly moral art is all that Arnold leaves us in the place of religious faith.[28] It is only a short step, if any step be necessary, to finding in literature the satisfaction which we found in religion. This new confusion takes several forms. I find it in the humanism of Irving Babbitt, and in the more recent theories of critics of such opposed views as Middleton Murry and I. A. Richards. Mr. Murry seems to maintain that poetry *is* religion; Mr. Richards rather more moderately that poetry is the best thing we can have instead of religion.[29] I am not concerned to criticize such theories from a theological point of view; for indeed they fall beyond the reach of such criticism; I am anxious rather lest they distort our enjoyment of poetry. The poet tends to be appointed, not indeed a priest of his own cult, for he is not allowed to interpret himself; but rather a Grand Llama imprisoned in princely privacy while the critical priests carry on the real business.[30] A dead poet for this purpose is better than a living one, as he cannot be so indiscreet as to speak for himself. But criticism itself will be biased, according to the particular oracles we consult; and as some critics will find their religion in some poetry and some in others, the judgment of poetry as poetry will become of dwindling interest.

Dryden, then, both as poet and as critic, seems to me a very great defender of sanity. I do not think[31†] that I have made any extravagant claims for him. For that matter, I have not said much that is original. Dryden is no discovery; there are few of his merits as a writer that have not been discovered and brought to light by one or another earlier critic. I have no desire to see his works on every drawing room table, or even to see a generation of versifiers employ their talent upon political satire and theological controversy. I do not suppose that at any time he will ever be anyone's favourite poet, or engross the adolescent mind for a season as the romantic poets can do. I have purposely avoided trying to give a course in "How to Enjoy Dryden," because the people who can really enjoy his poetry need no assistance from me or from anyone. But it is worth while to know what Dryden did for the English language in verse and in prose, because we shall understand better what the language is, of what it is capable, and of what it is still capable.[32†]

NOTES

1. As printed in *John Dryden: The Poet, the Dramatist, the Critic* (New York: Terence & Elsa Holliday, 1932) [49-68]; originally broadcast at 5 p.m. on Sunday, 26 Apr 1931, as TSE's final talk in a series of three weekly lectures on John Dryden and subsequently published in abbreviated form as "John Dryden – III. Dryden the Critic, Defender of Sanity," *The Listener*, 5 (29 Apr 1931), 724-25. TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

2. *Essays of John Dryden*, 2 vols, ed. W. P. Ker (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1900). TSE owned a copy of *Dryden's Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (London: Dent, 1912) in the Everyman library edition (hereafter *Dramatic Essays*).

3. TSE asserts what he calls this "undemonstrable theory" toward the end of "Dryden the Dramatist" (4.281, n.30)

4. Addison wrote two essays on the fifteenth-century ballad *Chevy Chase* for the *Spectator* in May 1711 (nos. 70, 74) and a series of weekly critical papers on *Paradise Lost* in the *Spectator* from Jan to May 1712 (nos. 267-369), which were collected into a volume in 1719. TSE echoes Dr. Johnson's remark in his "Life of Dryden" (1779) that "Dryden may be properly considered as the father of English criticism" (*Lives*, 161).

5†. In *Listener*: "and varied"

6. In 1660 Corneille's *Théâtre* collected his plays in three volumes, each volume prefaced with a "Discours" responding to criticisms from the French Academy.

7. Swift and Dryden were second cousins once removed.

8. Dryden's "An Essay of Dramatic Poesy" (1668) was the first essay collected in TSE's Everyman edition of Dryden's essays.

9. In "The Possibility of a Poetic Drama" (1920), TSE remarks of Plato's preface to *Theaetetus* (ca. 359 BC), a dialogue on the nature of knowledge: "In a few opening words Plato gives a scene, a personality, a feeling, which colour the subsequent discourse but do not interfere with

it: the particular setting, and the abstruse theory of knowledge afterwards developed, co-operate without confusion" (2.281).

10. *Dramatic Essays*, 5. Dryden's "Of Dramatic Poesy" is cast in the form of a dialogue among four characters: Crites defends the ancients: Eugenius defends the moderns; Lisideius the French neoclassic drama; Neander English drama; thereafter Crites defends blank verse and Neander rhyme. TSE adopted a similar form in his "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry," which served as the introduction to a 1928 edition of Dryden's essay (3.396).

11. "Examen Poeticum" (1693), *Dramatic Essays*, 197.

12. For TSE's reflections on the satire of *Absalom and Achitophel* (1681), see "John Dryden" (1921) and "John Dryden" (1930).

13. In a letter to the Earl of Dorset, Dryden praised Rymer's *The Tragedies of the Last Age* (1678), a neoclassical attack on Elizabethan and Jacobean drama. In a note in "Hamlet" (1919), TSE claimed that: "I have never, by the way, seen a cogent refutation of Thomas Rymer's objections to *Othello*" (2.127, n.5).

14. TSE refers to Thomas Campion's *Observations in the Art of English Poesie* (1602) and Samuel Daniel's reply "A Defence of Ryme" in his *Panegyrike to the King* (1603). In "A Romantic Aristocrat" (1919), TSE remarks that a study by George Wyndham "overrates Sidney, and in his references to Elizabethan writings on the theory of poetry omits mention of the essay by Campion, an abler and more daring though less common-sense study than Daniel's" (2.29). TSE develops his reflections on Elizabethan criticism in the second of his Norton lectures (4.597).

15. In "The Grounds of Criticism in Tragedy" (1679), Dryden refers to Rapin as "a judicious critic" and to Bossu as "the best of modern critics" (*Dramatic Essays*, 131, 132). Dryden read Rymer's translation of *Reflections on Aristotle's Treatise of Poesie* (1674) by René Rapin (1621-87) and *Traité du poème épique* [*Treatise on Epic Poetry*] (1675) by René Le Bossu (1631-80).

16. *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, an alliterative verse romance believed to date from the late fourteenth century.

17. Dryden praises Chaucer in the preface to his *Fables* (1700) as "the father of English poetry" albeit "a rough diamond, and must first be polished ere he shines" (*Dramatic Essays*, 280, 285).

18. For Dryden's comments on Shakespeare (and Fletcher), see "Of Dramatic Poesy" as well as the prefaces to *All for Love* (1678) and to *Troilus and Cressida* (1679), in which he asserts: "Shakespeare had an universal mind, which comprehended all characters and passions; Fletcher a more confined and limited: for though he treated love in perfection, yet honour, ambition, revenge, and generally all the stronger passions, he either touched not, or not masterly" (*Dramatic Essays*, 144).

19. In his introduction to *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), TSE praised G. Wilson Knight's readings of Shakespeare's plays for "pursuing his search for the pattern below the level of 'plot and 'character'" (4.150) TSE particularly admired Knight's interpretation of Shakespeare's last plays in *Myth and Miracle* (1929).

20. In "Of Dramatic Poesy" Dryden borrows from Corneille's "Discours des trois unités" [Discourse on the Three Unities] (1660), updating Aristotle's recommendation of unity of action, but he also criticizes French drama for a doctrinaire lack of flexibility. In TSE's "A Dialogue of Dramatic Poetry" (1928), speaker E comments on the French influence on Dryden's dramatic theory: "The Unities of Place and Time, for instance. Dryden gives what is the

soundest and most commonsense view possible for his time and place" (3.408). Bernard Shaw's play *Back to Methuselah* (1921) dramatizes a time span stretching from the Garden of Eden to the year 31,920. For TSE's critique of Shaw's theory of "creative evolution" as advanced in *Back to Methuselah*, see his "London Letter" for the *Dial* of Oct 1921 (2.370).

21. Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* is set in Rome, Corioles, and Antium (all in central Italy); *Antony and Cleopatra* has scenes in Rome, Alexandria in Egypt, and Actium in Greece.

22. In "Of Dramatic Poesy," Dryden's spokesman Neander defends tragicomedy: "A scene of mirth, mixed with tragedy, has the same effect upon us which our music has betwixt the acts; which we find a relief to us from the best plots and language of the stage, if the discourses have been long" (*Dramatic Essays*, 33).

23. For TSE's discussion of comic roles in Shakespearean tragedy, see "The Beating of a Drum" (2.471). His remarks here on the juxtaposition of the everyday and tragic events recalls De Quincey's famous essay "On the Knocking on the Gate in *Macbeth*" (1823).

24†. The following paragraph contained in the broadcast was deleted in the *Listener* and in *John Dryden*: "I have said as much as I have time to say, and that is very little, of the manner and the matter of Dryden's critical prose. It remains, in the time I have left, to try and sum up briefly the importance of his criticism in the history of criticism, and the importance which it can still have."

25. TSE develops his comments on the prose criticism of Coleridge – including the "disorderly" *Biographia Literaria* (1817) – Wordsworth, and Arnold in his Norton lectures.

26. "The Proper Wit of Poetry" (1667), *Dramatic Essays*, 192. TSE quotes from this essay in his seventh Clark lecture when discussing metaphysical "wit" (2.730).

27†. In *Listener*: "from the unconscious"

28. TSE discusses Arnold's reflections on poetry and religion at length in "Arnold and Pater" (1930) (4.176).

29. For TSE's recent discussions of Babbitt's New Humanism, see "Religion without Humanism" (1930) (4.36); of Murry's "Metabiology," see "A Review of *God*" (4.8); and for his critique of Richards's literary theory, see "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930) (4.20).

30. The Grand Llama or Dalai Lama is a spiritual teacher of Tibetan Buddhism.

31†. In *Listener*: "in reviewing what I have said in these three talks"

32†. In *Listener*: "what it can be"

If I Were a Dean

Chichester Diocesan Gazette, 12 (May 1931) 188-91[1]

My first thought of "If I were a Dean" is not of what I should want to do, but of what I should want *not* to do: and I make no apology. I have nothing but admiration and pity for those Deans who have toiled unceasingly, made appeals and collected subscriptions year after year, for – what? Merely to keep their minsters from tumbling about their ears. To me a cathedral is primarily a place of worship, the focus of devotion of its diocese, and not a National Monument: but I think – the State being already so far Socialised, and the position of the Church in the State being what it is – that the structural repair of cathedrals, and perhaps also of all those churches which have historic and architectural importance, ought to be at the cost of the State. We hear a good deal, in the Press, about the necessity of attracting American tourists, or of inducing them to spend more time and money in Britain, in proportion to what they spend on the Continent – even the new Park Lane ogles the American tourist.[2] Well, cathedrals are a valuable asset to a country, particularly if a dignified urban and rural amenity is preserved around them; they are an asset, that is, to steamship lines, railways, motor-bus services, local tradesmen, postcard makers and tourist agencies. The nation as a whole, I contend, should be made to pay for their mere *preservation*, rather than that part of the nation for which they are primarily places of worship and devotion.

I am quite well aware of all the difficulties involved in carrying out such a drastic proposal; and if I were a Dean under the settlement I suggest, I dare say I might in the end prefer to be buried by the collapse of the roof of my own cathedral, rather than buried under a mass of correspondence, memoranda and instructions from the Office of Works, to say nothing of the visits of committees and inquisitory officials. To my irresponsible vision, however, these difficulties are details to be settled by ingenious compromise; the point is that in my Utopian deanery there will be no anxiety about the framework of the cathedral.

I should thus hope to be free to collect, and to use, funds not for the mere preservation of the bones of my cathedral, but for the interior beautification of its living body. And I should try to avoid the fault of making my interior a period piece, of being overawed by the designs of its remote builders. I have seen old and beautiful churches which modern hands seemed afraid to touch, and which therefore remained mere remains; and I have also seen modern churches in which the decorators seemed fearful of departing by a decade, in the least ornament or altar cloth, from the period style in which the church was built. I prefer rather a church which shows the loving attempts of generation after generation, each according to its own notions of beauty, to leave visible testimony of its devotion. I should like to be able to encourage the best contemporary artists in stone, metal, paint and wood, to apply themselves to the decoration of my cathedral; and the best musicians to make music for its offices. As for music, if I were to be the ideal dean for my ideal deanery, I should have to know a great more about it than I do. I have, however, one heretical notion. I admit that the organ[3†] is considered indispensable everywhere, but I should like at least to supplement it, sometimes, by a small orchestra, of strings and woodwind, assembled from local talent (and I am sure that there is plenty of musical talent in rural England). There would be two advantages. Anyone who has heard instrumental music in certain continental churches knows that the organ is by no means the only medium for church music. And everything that engages more individuals in the responsibility and pride of beautifying the church service, is an encouragement to the communal life.

My cathedral, then, would be richly decorated inside: with tapestries (as, for example, they hang round the bases of columns in the cathedral of Toulouse),[4] with modern religious paintings, with memorial tablets (but only to good churchmen), with chapels and church furniture. Should not the resources of art be devoted to God, instead of merely to the palaces of the rich and finally to museums? I hold also the theory, that it is chiefly in the life of such a centre as a cathedral that art can vitally affect us. Who, except the technical expert, can wholly enjoy a visit to an art museum or an evening in a concert room? I might enlarge upon this, but I must stick to my points and keep within my space: a cathedral where art – not merely archaeology – is dedicated to God, seems to me the best place in which art can flourish.

All my notions of decoration and of music, however, are ancillary to one main purpose: to make the cathedral the centre of religious and artistic activity in its diocese. In the Anglican Church, parishioners (and I think this is equally true, so far as it is true, of every division within the Church) tend to grow an excessive attachment to their own particular parish church, or the particular church of their election (and even to a particular vicar or rector). The best way to offset this particularism, would be to encourage in them the same sort of affection towards the Cathedral of their diocese. I realise that for the immediate future such an ideal is impossible in many dioceses – but my ideal deanery is not for the immediate future either.

I should devise as many cathedral ceremonies as possible beyond those which take place at times when the faithful are usually in attendance at their own churches, and with special relation to the seasons of the church year. I am sure that I should pay particular attention to the performance of religious drama. I do not underrate the beauty of our mediaeval religious drama, and I should try, not I hope, to "revive" it, but to keep it alive; but at the same time I should still more encourage the composition and the performance of plays by contemporary authors.[5] Some people maintain that a good religious play cannot be written nowadays; I believe, as I believe of religious painting and sculpture, that if the opportunity is given, the work will be done. We must expect that the early attempts will be imperfect but I am sure that in time poets and dramatists, as well as painters and sculptors and artisans, will not be lacking.

But in no two cathedrals would or should conditions be quite the same; and, wherever my deanery was situated, I should wish to encourage and stimulate first the local spirit of that part of England. I should not wish my cathedral celebrations to be like getting Moisevitch or Jelly d'Aranyi to entertain the guests at a country house party.[6] And for such activities as religious drama, I should want to have them performed, as far as possible, *within* the cathedral itself.

But besides all these interests and duties, and besides all the functions of a Dean which I know nothing about, I maintain that a Dean should have sufficient continuous leisure to be able to apply himself to some considerable work of scholarship or of original theological and philosophical writing. If his other duties make this impossible, then his other duties should be reduced.[7†]

And lastly, I should want, for myself, a little more leisure still. There is a book which I have never been able to buy, and which I have never had room to accommodate even could I buy it, and which I have never had the time to read even could I buy it and house it. If I were a Dean, I should hope that I might be able to have it, to have shelves for it, and to read as much of it as one man can reasonably expect to be able to read in a lifetime: it is Migne's *Patrologia Latina et Graeca*.[8]

NOTES

1. On 9 Feb 1931, TSE wrote to George Bell, Bishop of Chichester, formerly Dean of Canterbury Cathedral (1924-29), to accept his commission to contribute to a series of articles on the theme of "If I Were a Dean" for the *Chichester Diocesan Gazette*, which Bell was editing, remarking: "I am of course highly flattered by the commission you suggest for your diocesan paper and should very much like to undertake it, but the trouble is this. I have racked my brain over the week-end, and have not the slightest idea what I should do if I were a dean. I know that if I were a bishop I should go very quickly into a nursing-home for Nervous Disorders, but even that hardly seems worth saying. I feel that I should have to spend several weeks keeping a dean under close observation before I could think of anything to say. Now in the impasse, can anything be done?" (*L5* 480). On 20 Feb, TSE wrote again to say: "If, however, you cannot put your hand on anyone else who is bubbling over with ideas about what he would do if he were a Dean, I have thought the matter over, and think that I might be able to make a few suggestions however fatuous" (*L5* 485). TSE sent the typescript of his contribution to Rev. Colin Dunlop at the Palace of Chichester on 11 Apr with the note: "Would you please ask the Bishop to let me know if it will do, or if not, to give me hints? There is enough time, and I would willingly amend it" (*L5* 541). The typescript included in the letter to Dunlop was published with minor revisions, as noted (TS of text in *L5* 541-44).

2. Park Lane is a road on the eastern boundary of Hyde Park in central London. Formerly a fashionable residential address, in the twentieth century it became the site of several luxury hotels, including the Dorchester, which opened on 18 Apr 1931.

3†. In TS: "organ of St. Cecilia must be" (*L5* 542); St. Cecilia is the patron saint of musicians and church music.

4. In a letter of 22 May 1911, TSE revealed that he visited Toulouse in the Christmas period of 1910-11 (*L1* 20).

5. Bishop Bell, President of the Religious Drama Society, encouraged the performance of new plays by John Masefield, Charles Williams, and others in church settings. In Sept 1930, Bell appointed the theater director E. Martin Browne as Director of Religious Drama for the Diocese of Chichester. TSE discussed religious drama with Bell and Browne at the Palace of Chichester on 14-15 Dec 1930; their conversations led to TSE's collaboration with Browne on the religious pageant *The Rock* (1934) and to *Murder in the Cathedral*, commissioned by Bishop Bell for the Canterbury Festival of 1935.

6. Benno Moisevitch (1890-1963), Russian-born pianist, and Jelly D'Aranyi (1893-1966), Hungarian-born violinist, both resident in London.

7†. In TS: "for the importance of this opportunity, and the freedom to employ it as he pleases, seem to be capital" (*L5* 544).

8. In his third Clark lecture, TSE refers to Jacques-Paul Migne's monumental 221-volume edition of early Christian theology *Patrologia Latina* (1844-45) (2:652). Since 1923, TSE had been making inquiries about obtaining copies of this edition (*L2* 246, 793; *L3* 107). Migne's *Patrologia Graeca* (1857-58) contains 161 volumes in Greek text with Latin translation.

A review of *The Prospects of Humanism*, by Lawrence Hyde

London: Gerald Howe, 1931. Pp. 250.

The English Review, 53 (June 1931) 118, 120

This is the second of a series of three volumes, the first of which was *The Learned Knife*; for the third we are promised a discussion of "modern religious tendencies."[1] In this book, which is clearly thought out and well written, Mr. Hyde establishes himself as a brilliant and thoroughgoing critic of critics; he might be described as a potential leader of the second, or perhaps the third, generation of humanists; and in these days of dog-eat-dog in the criticism of literature and life, that is no small promise. He is concerned with such writers as Benda and Fernandez in France; E. R. Curtius in Germany; Babbitt and More in America; and Wyndham Lewis, Fausset, Murry, Read, McEachren and myself in England; but chiefly, and quite rightly, with the ideas of Mr. Babbitt and Mr. Middleton Murry.[2]

The book falls into three parts. In the first, Mr. Hyde analyses the positive doctrine of Mr. Irving Babbitt. He is quite right to ignore, for his purpose, both Mr. More, who cannot be classified as a "pure" humanist, and the young disciples of Mr. Babbitt, most of whom have succeeded only in ossifying the more vital and flexible ideas of their master.[3] The first and third parts of the book are closely parallel; and to my mind the author makes a very good job of demonstrating the inconsistency and inadequacy of both doctrines, the purely human, and the more ambitious "naturalism" of Mr. Murry: their inconsistency with themselves, and their inadequacy to the religious instincts of humanity.[4] Mr. Hyde's double success is all the more remarkable for his genuine sympathy with both of two writers so opposite in sensibility, and for his admirable temperateness and indifference to mere debating points. He is the first critic, so far as I know, to point out the affinity of Mr. Murry with Mr. Santayana.[5]

It is, however, the second part of the book which seems to me the most original. The author is partly occupied with Mr. Clive Bell, as a typical "high-brow" and aesthete; but the section is more important for the author's general observations than for his critique of the aesthetics of

Mr. Bell.[6] It is really Mr. Aldous Huxley who should be the most conspicuous figure in this part of the book, for, as Mr. Hyde is quite well aware, it is Mr. Huxley who has made the clearest and most conscious statements of the disease of intellectualism which Mr. Huxley himself exhibits.[7] What Mr. Hyde gives is really a diagnosis of the meaning of *culture* in modern life, of its limitations and of its spiritual dangers; it is accordingly an account which every cultivated or "civilized" person ought to read and ponder.

> the man of today, although highly *cultured* – in the sense that he has a very full knowledge of what happens – is at the same time conspicuously untutored in the art of conducting his life. People today are aware to a remarkable degree of what it is that has to be dealt with, of what facts must be faced, but they are no less distinguished by their restlessness and impotence. Never, surely, has a generation been so incredibly well informed and yet so fatally lacking in wisdom. [159]
>
> [But] the effect which great beauty has upon us today is in a large measure that of exasperating our nerves, of making us restless and ultimately miserable. [165]

We must await the third volume with alert curiosity if with some scepticism.[8] For Mr. Hyde, who so convincingly shows the religious inadequacy of modern winds of doctrine, can yet say "The religion of the Churches is a dead religion; on that point one must remain firm" [168]. Many people have had that thought; what is Mr. Hyde's "life"? I have yet to hear of anything more living than the word of Christ in His Church.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. *The Learned Knife: An Essay on Science and Human Values* (1928). On 21 Nov 1927, TSE wrote to decline this book, provisionally titled "Institution and the Social Order," on behalf of Faber & Faber. Lawrence Hyde (1894-1957) was the author of ten books examining the interrelation of science, religion, humanism, and the arts.

On 17 Mar 1931, TSE informed Middleton Murry: "have you seen Lawrence Hyde's new book which contains a good deal of criticism of yourself to which I should largely subscribe?" (*L5* 522). This is the first of TSE's three reviews for the *English Review* this year. TSE became acquainted with the new editor of the *English Review*, Douglas Jerrold, in Mar 1931 when approached to collaborate with the periodical (*L5* 513). Jerrold contributed an article entitled "Authority, Mind and Power" to the *Criterion* for Jan 1933 (222-43).

2. Hyde's own list is wider: "Thus, to mention only some of the more outstanding names, we have in France Julien Benda and Ramon Fernandez, in Germany the late Walther Rathenau,

Count Keyserling, and Robert Curtius. In America we have the 'new humanists,' with Irving Babbitt and Paul Elmer More at their head, and such men as Walter Lippmann, Joseph Wood Krutch, Waldo Frank, Allen Tate, and Montgomery Belgion; in England the late T. E. Hulme, General Smuts, Wyndham Lewis, T. S. Eliot, Herbert Read, F. McEachran, C. E. M. Joad, Middleton Murry, H. l'A. Fausset, and Adrian Stokes" (12-13). On the pre-eminence accorded to Murry and Babbitt, Hyde remarks: "the New Romanticism stands or falls with Mr. Murry to the same degree that the New Humanism stands or falls with Mr. Babbitt" (170).

3. Hyde comments: "no one of his followers would appear to have made any notable advance beyond the point reached originally by Mr. Babbitt" (75).

4. "What I want to emphasize," remarks Hyde, "is the fact that it is little use for modern educated people to pretend that they can get along without *any* religion beyond the vague idealism of the cultured" (168).

5. Hyde contends: "The vision of the seer is a vision of essences; Mr. Murry follows faithfully here in the footsteps of Mr. Santayana" (187).

6. After quoting from Bell's *Civilization* (1928), Hyde remarks: "We meet here with a characteristic expression of the 'high-brow' attitude to experience. For the ultra-civilized individual the most precious delights are those which are to be obtained from refined aesthetic perception, from contemplating intricate and subtle relationships, from intercourse with highly sophisticated minds. Before everything, he demands that his sensations should be keen and exquisite. But it is highly disputable whether they are more worth having than certain others which can be enjoyed by the simple" (122).

7. Hyde illustrates "the character of the disease with which our modern intellectuals are afflicted" by quoting from Huxley's novel *Point Counter Point* (1928): "All that intelligence could seize upon he seized. She reported to him her intercourse with the natives of the realm of emotion and he understood at once, he generalized her experience for her, he related it with other experiences, classified it, found analogies and parallels" (39).

8. In fact, the third volume did not appear.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 10 (July 1931) 709-16

Something happened at the Fishmongers' Hall not long ago which deserves some further record than the short and simple annals of *The Financial Times*. It was the dinner of the British Bankers' Association.[1] The presiding sprite was Mr. J. Beaumont Pease,[2]* and the ghost of the evening was the Lord Chancellor.[3] Mr. Pease, after the toast of "His Majesty's Government," took the opportunity of conveying to His Majesty's Government, through the Lord Chancellor, the following message:

> We believe that the financial and commercial condition of this country is in a *very serious state*. We do *not* believe that the condition can be met by *merely* marking time and *hoping* for better things. The position must be faced and faced *squarely*. *If* we as a nation are spending more than we can afford, it must stop. Bankers and business men know that there is only one end to such a course if pursued *sufficiently* far.[4]

(The italics are mine, but the words are Mr. Pease's.) Then, after pease porridge hot, came pease porridge cold.[5] Mr. Pease remembered that "this type of gathering" had recently been described as an assembly of money barons and frigid penguins.[6] This moved him to report the description of the penguin which he had read in a book of eighteenth century travels. It was a friendly bird, etc. The rest of his speech may be abbreviated as follows:

> There are many bonds of sympathy between bankers and Government. . . . Unemployment is said to be the fault of the Government: in my own personal opinion it is not in the power of any Government to cure this evil, whatever its power may be to increase it. . . . Another reason why bankers and the Government should feel sympathetic towards each other is that we are both accused of extravagance. . . . Another bond of sympathy between us both is that we both depend for our prosperity, and even our existence, upon the prosperity and goodwill of the country. . . . Finally, we are both exposed to the same temptations. . . .

Lord Sankey, in responding, was in "humorous vein," we are told, as well he might be after this exhibition of penguin frigidity. Having, in any case, been put into a jovial mood – shall we say a Sankey Mood[7] – he had the happy thought to remember the Royal & Ancient.[8] "It is a matter of proud satisfaction to all of us (1) that at any rate an Englishman will shortly play himself in at St. Andrew's." (Laughter.) (2) "Permit me, sir, as the worst golfer on any course within twenty miles of Charing Cross to offer my respectful felicitations." (Laughter.) (3):

> We took office upon 8th June, 1929. It will very soon be June of 1931, and therefore, sir, your golfing experience will at once point out to you that the position is this: we are two up and three to go. (Laughter) . . . . I spend half of my time on the golf links in bunkers. (Laughter). Certainly my best club and I think the best club of the Labour Party is a niblick.[9] (Laughter). It makes us sympathise with that oppressed and hard-working individual the agricultural labourer. (4) . . . We live in an age of great social unrest. . . . Let me tell you at once that after forty years of weary waiting and unswerving loyalty what a pleasure it is to me to-night to sit next to the Chairman of Lloyds Bank. . . . Plenty of work will come. Of that I have no fear. But my anxiety is, and your anxiety is, while many are waiting for work they may be losing the will to work. That is the real danger of England. . . . I am sometimes astonished at the disasters which it is said will come over this country should we remain much longer in power.
>
> *Comment*: (1) What! Were there no *Scottish* bankers at the dinner of this *British* Association? Bravo, Scotland. (2) There seem to have been a few Scots present after all. (3) More Scots. (4) What! No laughter? [9]

Rather surprisingly, *The Financial Times* gives as a caption to its report of this dinner "COMMERCE AND FINANCE IN A VERY SERIOUS STATE."

Under the form of eternity, of course, such a gathering as that reported differs little from the annual feast of the humblest cricket club in the country; to a human eye it differs in this respect, that such wit and humour, when they irradiate, as they often do, the reunions of local athletic societies, are more in place there, and in better taste.

Let Mr. André Siegfried[10]* wag his head over all this. Mr. Siegfried has written a good book, as was to be expected from the author of *Les États-Unis d'aujourd'hui*;[11] it will have a large sale and library demand; it will confirm many intelligent opinions; but I fear that it will leave the majority of readers with the reassuring afterthought that after all, Mr. Siegfried is a Frenchman, and no foreigner can really understand British politics. And the trouble with the book is that it is too much economics and statistics – what, as Mr. Siegfried admits and emphasises, has already been pointed out by blue-book after blue-book.[12] No blue-book ever led to a change of heart; and we are so habituated now to a mood of economic pessimism that another dose of it merely cheers us up. The fact is, that Mr. Siegfried, though brilliant and very readable, is superficial. It is pleasant to be told that everything is wrong, when it is all put so generally that clearly there is nothing I myself can do about it. But how much Mr. Siegfried leaves out and how much of what he puts in is only the common ammunition of the more intellectual writers in the opposition press of the moment. Mr. Siegfried has hardly mentioned the public schools and the whole educational system; he says nothing about the family life, the religious and the moral beliefs of the ordinary Briton.[13] He is right enough so far as he goes – but that is only a little way; the real drastic criticism of England of to-day could probably only be written by an Englishman; and the book would hardly be a popular one.

The man to write it is certainly not Mr. Bernard Shaw. Yet we ought to examine the latest flowering of that hardy decennial, the *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (with a preface [1930] by G. B. Shaw. Fifth edition. Allen & Unwin. 2s. 6d.). The succession of prefaces runs from 1889 to 1930: an attractive title for the new edition would be *From William Morris to Sir William Morris*.[14] For the first edition, Mr. Sidney Webb told us in 1919: "Walter Crane kindly designed for us a striking cover, and Miss May Morris a decorative back" [xvi].[15] The fifth edition is as like a blue-book as possible, except that it is green. That is evidence of success. The authors, "journalists and junior Civil Servants," set out to make it (in Mr. Shaw's words) "as easy and matter-of-course for the ordinary respectable Englishman to be a Socialist as to be a Liberal or a Conservative" [xxxiii].[16] And even by 1908 Mr. Shaw could boast that "Membership of the Fabian Society, though it involves an express avowal of Socialism, excites no more comment than membership of the Society of Friends, or even of the Church of England" [xxxiii]; perhaps even Mr. Shaw hardly anticipated that in twenty years thence a *genuine* member of the Society of Friends or of the Church of England might become far more of a drawing-room rarity than a Socialist. "To-day (in 1908) we neither respect our opponents nor confute them" [xxxiv]. What was it to be by 1931!

And yet, gratifying as is this triumph, success is still incomplete. "As I write," says Mr. Shaw in 1930, "a Fabian Socialist is Prime Minister of

Britain. Two of our essayists are in the House of Lords: one of them a Cabinet minister and the other an ex-Cabinet minister" [v] (i.e., Sidney and Sydney, who do not see quite eye to eye on matters connected with the Sugar Industry).[17] "Parliament swarms with Fabians" [v], etc. "Our airs of democratic advance are equally imposing" (and this even before the Spanish revolution).[18] And yet "*there is more threat of bankruptcy in it than promise of the millennium*!" [vi].[19] So here is Mr. Shaw just as alarmed as Mr. Pease. Even Mr. Shaw is muttering "bread and circuses" [vii];[20] but the trouble of course is: Not Enough Socialism; we are trying to "gain the benefits of Socialism under Capitalism and at its expense" [vi], and therefore

> . . . our old Plan of Campaign for Labour, which has now been carried out only to land us in a no-thoroughfare, must be replaced by a new plan for the political reconstitution of British Society, eligible also as a model for the reconstitution of all modern societies. [xi]

This new plan – a Ten Year Plan, perhaps[21] – seems a pretty ambitious one. But Mr. Shaw says that "changeability is one of the recognized qualities of human nature" (xiii), although he acknowledges (xxxvi) that human nature has not changed since 1871.[22] But the latter statement was made in 1908, so perhaps human nature has changed between 1908 and 1930; or perhaps it is merely Mr. Shaw's nature that has not changed since 1871. But the programme for change for 1931-41 comprises a drastic alteration of the Parliamentary system – an abolition of the Party system altogether; a smaller and more efficient Cabinet; and "devolution" – which is something similar to what Maurras and his friends have been advocating in France for many years now – not, I believe, under the influence of Beatrice and Sidney Webb.[23] It is odd that the hints for the "new plan" should include so much that many people not Socialists had been approaching of themselves – such as home rule for Scotland and England; but no doubt the Fabians can take the credit for this, under the all-comprehensive theory of "Permeation."[24]

Nevertheless, whether human nature in general changes or not, the human opinions of Socialists seem to vary a good deal. Since Mr. Shaw penned the preface upon which I have been commenting, he has been haranguing a gathering of librarians at Letchworth – it *would* be librarians at Letchworth[25] – and in the course of an address on the English language, he is reported to have said "I will remain a Communist until I die" (not I *shall*, you observe, but I *will*).[26] In his preface indeed he remarked that the Russian revolution was "a most beneficent event" [xii] (though he still boasts of the "resolute constitutionalism" [viii] of the Fabians). What does His Holiness the Pope think of that? But Mr. Lansbury (who may or may not be a good Fabian) is annoyed with the Pope for his disapproval of Socialism – Mr. Lansbury was not speaking at Letchworth but at Bromley – and repeats the familiar assertion: "it is Capitalism, and not Socialism, that is on trial . . . . *If the Pope would come to England he would see the folly of trying to stop the progress of Socialism*."[27] Will Mr. Lansbury invite him? Let him see with his own eyes; let him come over this summer and have a bathe with Mr. Lansbury in the Serpentine, and a romp with him in the sand piles, and let him meet Mr. Lansbury's pals in Poplar, and he will soon recant and apologise![28] Yet I am not so sure. The present Lord Olivier, in his contribution to these Fabian Essays in 1889, was rather patronising to the Catholic Church.

> The oldest socialistic institution of considerable importance and extent is the now decrepit Catholic Church. . . . The Catholic Church developed, relatively to the enlightenment of its age (*query: what age*?), the widest and freest system of education the world has ever seen before this century.[29]* . . . Out of the wreckage of the Catholic Church, and amid the dissolution of the Protestant religion, there successively emerged, at an interval of some three hundred years, the two great socialistic institutions of the Poor Law and the People's Schools. [116-17]

It must be admitted that Lord Olivier, if he patronises the Catholic Church, is downright disrespectful to Protestantism.[30] What *is* the religion of a Fabian, anyway?

What Mr. Shaw and his friends do not seem to understand, in spite of the highly cultivated changeability of their human nature, is that the old contrast between Capitalism and Socialism is hardly going to suffice for the next forty years. It is not true that everyone will be born into the world either a little Capitalist or a little Socialist; and some persons even suspect that Socialism is merely a variant of Capitalism, or vice versa; and that the combat of Tweedledum and Tweedledee is not likely to lead to any millennium.[31] Certainly, there are many people, and there will be more, who are seeking some alternative to both. There are many who suspect that Socialism is not radical enough, in the sense that its roots penetrate no deeper than the blue-book stratum of human nature. It seems to have moral enthusiasm without moral profundity. Mr. Shaw might know more about the changeability of human nature if he knew more about its permanence.

And there are a great many hungry sheep who look up, and down, and all around them, and are not fed by the orations of Mr. Shaw, or Mr. Lansbury, any more satisfyingly than by those of Mr. Pease and Lord Sankey.[32]

Whether human nature changes or not, certainly everything about it changes. One cannot but be affected by a sense of change in reading the Hon. Evan Charteris's admirable biography of the late Sir Edmund Gosse.[33]* The book, I say, is an admirable piece of work; and whether or no we read the writing of Gosse, the book is well worth reading as a document upon an age that is past. The place that Sir Edmund Gosse filled in the literary and social life of London is one that no one can ever fill again, because it is, so to speak, an office that has been abolished.[34] Mr. Charteris seems to me – who have no outside means of judging – to be very just and fair, neither ignoring faults nor diminishing virtues. I will not say that Sir Edmund's activity was not a very useful activity, in a social-literary world which is rapidly receding into memory. He was, indeed, an amenity; but not quite any sort of amenity for which I can see any great need in our time. Mr. Charteris compares him to Sainte-Beuve; but I cannot see any solid ground for the comparison. Sainte-Beuve was not merely a "man of letters," he was not merely concerned to exploit and appraise and enjoy the riches of French literature of the past; he had a devouring and insatiable interest in human nature in books, and was forever brooding over problems which are perhaps insoluble.[35] The permanent and the changing in humanity; the problems of religious faith and doubt; the problems of the mind, the flesh and the spirit. Sir Edmund could not have written a masterpiece like *Port-Royal*, because he was not interested enough; he could not even have written a book comparable to *Chateaubriand*.[36] He was interested in literature for literature's sake; and I think that people whose interests are so strictly limited, people who are not gifted with any restless curiosity and not tormented by the demon of thought, somehow miss the keener emotions which literature can give.[37] And, in our time, both temporary and eternal problems press themselves upon the intelligent mind with an insistence which they did not seem to have in the reign of King Edward VII.[38]

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. The British Bankers' Association annual dinner was held at the Fishmongers' Hall, London Bridge, on 13 May.

2*. TSE's note: "Mr. Beaumont Pease has recently been elected to the captaincy of the Royal & Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrew's [*sic*]. He is also captain of the Royal St. George's Golf Club, and therefore will hold the two offices concurrently, a distinction only achieved previously, I believe, by Lord Forster and Captain Angus V. Hambro. Mr. Pease is also, I believe, distantly connected with Andrew Marvell." President of the British Bankers' Association, John William Beaumont Pease (1869-1950), since 1922 Chairman of Lloyds Bank, was a keen golfer, winning a blue for golf at Oxford and regularly challenging for the UK amateur championship.

3. John Sankey, Baron Sankey (1866-1948), was Lord Chancellor in MacDonald's Labour Cabinet. A high-churchman, Sankey later met TSE through mutual acquaintances in the Church of England.

4. Speech quoted in "Bankers' Reminder to the Government. / Commerce and Finance in a Very Serious State," *Financial Times* (14 May 1931), 9 (TSE's italics). The British Bankers' Association dinner was held at Fishmongers' Hall the previous evening with the president J. W. Beaumont Pease in the chair.

5. TSE alludes to the children's nursery rhyme: "Pease porridge hot, pease porridge cold, / Pease porridge in the pot, nine days old."

6. Pease was responding to Lloyd George's criticism of the City of London, voiced in the House of Commons on 12 Feb 1931, in which the leader of the Liberal Party laid a "very large part" of the blame for the current economic depression and rising unemployment on "the mishandling of monetary questions, on the advice of the money barons," adding that he had "been received by the City magnates with frigid and flapping silence, as if they were a row of penguins in the Arctic Ocean." Parliamentary report in the *Times* (13 Feb 1931), 7.

7. A play on names: the evangelists Moody and Sankey. Dwight Lyman Moody (1837-99) and Ira David Sankey (1840-1908) toured the United States and the United Kingdom during the 1870s, performing Christian gospel songs to large crowds.

8. Founded in 1754, the Royal and Ancient Golf Club of St. Andrews, Scotland, is one of the oldest golf clubs in the world and is widely regarded as the "home of golf."

9. niblick (OED): "an iron (formerly wooden) golf club, originally one with a relatively short face and subsequently applied to most lofted irons with a heavy head, used esp. for playing out of bunkers and rough ground."

10*. TSE's note: "*England's Crisis*. By André Siegfried. (Cape.) 10s. 6d." Translation by H. H. Hemming and Doris Hemming of *La Crise britannique au XXe siècle* (1931).

11. *Les États-Unis d'aujourd'hui* (1927), translated into English in 1928 as *America Comes of Age, a French Analysis* by H. H. Hemming and Doris Hemming. TSE praised Siegfried's "remarkable book" in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Mar 1928 (3.366) and in his preface to *This American World* (1928) as a "carefully documented study of the social, political and economic life of America, observed as something distinct from Europe" (3.186).

12. Siegfried comments: "Every year since 1921 statistics, those merciless modern messengers, have been warning England that she is losing her markets, and that her industrial structure is trembling on its foundations" (30); although he pointed out that these problems could be discerned as far back as the 1880s: "For over 40 years the Blue Books have been perpetually

repeating the same grave warnings" (24). The so-called Blue Book is an annual publication of the Office of National Statistics containing estimates of the United Kingdom's domestic and national product, income, and expenditure.

13. Siegfried criticizes British schools because "they put character before business ability, and certainly before science," concluding that this "easy-going attitude explains why the British business man so often lets himself be outdistanced by more aggressive and capable rivals" (66-67).

14. Shaw's "Preface to the 1931 Reprint" (dated 1930) remarks: "When the greatest Socialist of that day [1880s], the poet and craftsman William Morris, told the workers that there was no hope for them save in revolution, we said that if that were true there was no hope at all for them . . . It is not so certain to-day as it seemed in the eighties that Morris was not right" (viii-ix). TSE's mock title alludes to the fact that two of the Fabian essayists – Sidney Webb, created first Baron Passfield, and Sydney Olivier, created first Baron Olivier – had been raised to the peerage.

15. Walter Crane (1845-1915), illustrator, designer, and painter, joined the Socialist League in 1884, adapting the emblematic figures of his paintings to socialist themes. May Morris (1861-1938), designer and craftswoman, was the younger daughter of William Morris, whom she followed by joining the Socialist League.

16. *Fabian Essays in Socialism* contained essays by Shaw, Webb, Olivier, William Clarke, Graham Wallas, Annie Besant, and Hubert Bland.

17. Sidney Webb was President of the Board of Trade and Sydney Olivier was Secretary for India in Ramsay MacDonald's first Labour Cabinet (formed Jan 1924). Webb, Colonial and Dominions Secretary in MacDonald's second Labour Cabinet (formed June 1929), was highly embarrassed by Olivier's 1930 report on the sugar industry advocating an increase in the United Kingdom's preferential treatment of West Indian producers through subsidies and tariffs, leading to a testy public exchange between the two men. TSE discusses this report in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1930.

18. King Alfonso XIII fled Spain on 14 Apr 1931 following Republican gains in the municipal elections.

19. TSE's italics and exclamation mark

20. Shaw observes: "Members of seasonal trades now draw the dole [unemployment benefit] through the off-season for which the on-season formerly provided. This state of things is clearly the 'bread and circuses' of the ancient Roman proletariat over again" [vii]. Shaw alludes to Juvenal's remark "Duas tantum res anxius optat, / Panem et circenses" [the Roman mob anxiously desires just two things: bread and games"] (*Satires*, x, 80-81).

21. TSE compares the central planning advocated by the Fabians to the Five-Year Plan for the national economy of the Soviet Union launched by Stalin in 1928.

22. Referring to the timidity of some political radicals in Paris in 1871, Shaw states: "Human nature has not changed since then" (xxxii).

23. Shaw comments: "What is called devolution, or the delegation of the less comprehensive work to the urban and district local authorities, is baffled by the retention of our old local boundaries . . . It is not now a question of regional councils but of additional central parliaments, with 'home rule' for England and Scotland" [xiv]. Sidney and Beatrice Webb put forward their proposals for "devolution" and the reorganisation of local government in *A Constitution for the Socialist Commonwealth of Great Britain* (1920). Maurras's royalist Action française movement

was anti-parliamentarian but committed to authority in accord with a respect for regional liberties.

24. Hubert Bland's essay "The Transition to Social Democracy: The Outlook" called for "the permeation of the Radical Left," also contemplating "the slow absorption of the Socialist in the Liberal Party" (196).

25. Shaw delivered a lecture on "Libraries and the English Language" at India House, Letchworth on 25 Feb 1931, reproduced in *Independent Shavian*, 31 (1993). Letchworth in Hertfordshire was the first garden city founded in 1903 by Ebenezer Howard, an associate of Shaw and the Webbs. This Allen & Unwin edition of *Fabian Essays in Socialism* was printed by the Garden City Press in Letchworth.

26. According to Eric Partridge, "Mere futurity is expressed by *shall* in the first person ('I shall go', 'We shall go') and by *will* in the second and third persons ('You *or* he will go', 'They will go')." Partridge quotes C. T. Onions's remark that: "The faultless idiomatic use of *shall* and *will* is one of the points which are regarded as infallible tests of the correct English speaker; it offers peculiar difficulties to Scots, Irishmen, and Americans" (*Usage and Abusage*, Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1967) 280.

27. TSE's italics. Lansbury's speech was quoted in "Mr. Lansbury replies to the Pope: 'Folly' of Any Attempt to Check Socialism," *Glasgow Herald* (18 Mar 1931), 12. Since 1922, Lansbury was Labour MP for the London constituency of Bow and Bromley.

28. TSE pokes fun at Lansbury's Cabinet role as First Commissioner of Works, overseeing the construction of children's playgrounds in the London parks and the swimming pool on the Serpentine in Hyde Park (popularly known as "Lansbury's Lido") in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1930. In 1921, as Mayor of Poplar, one of the poorest boroughs in London, Lansbury had led a rebellion against tax rates and was incarcerated in Brixton Prison for contempt of court.

29*. TSE's note: "Lord Olivier seems to imply that the 'age' of the Catholic Church came to an end somewhere in the early part of the nineteenth century." In his essay "The Basis of Socialism: Moral," Olivier blames the Reformation for dismantling in England the charity and education provided by the medieval Catholic Church.

30. Olivier comments: "Protestant Individualism in England shattered the Catholic Church; founded the modern land system upon its confiscated estates; destroyed the mediaeval machinery of charity and education; and in religion rehabilitated the devil, and the doctrines of original sin and the damnable danger of reason and good works" (117).

31. Two children in English nursery rhymes (and Lewis Carroll's Alice books) who look identical and act in the same way.

32. An allusion to Ezekiel 34:2: "Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe *be* to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks?"

33*. TSE's note: "*Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse*: by the Hon. Evan Charteris. Heinemann, 25s." Hon. Evan Charteris (1864-1940) biographer, barrister, and arts administrator.

34. On 12 Dec 1917, at a poetry reading at Sybil Colefax's house, Gosse publicly rebuked TSE for arriving late and was further annoyed by TSE's reading of his satirical poems, including "The Hippopotamus." On 22 Oct 1922, TSE complained to Pound that "Gosse is certainly the last person in England to give me any assistance if he could avoid it" (*L1* 767). In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Sept 1927, TSE remarked: "Sir Edmund Gosse is completely out of touch with modern poetry" (3.186).

In a letter of 20 Jan 1932, TSE assented to F. R. Leavis's claims that "Skimming through *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse* one cannot help reflecting that he himself was a portent. He had, it appears, no qualification for authority except a belief in his right to it. . . . His critical incapacity, sometimes comic, was always complete. And yet his success was complete too; he imposed himself and became an institution, the embodiment of critical authority" (later published in "What's Wrong with Criticism?" *Scrutiny*, Sept 1932, 137).

35. Charteris compares the literary essays Gosse wrote for the *Sunday Times* with Sainte-Beuve's "*Causeries* in the *Constitutionnel*" (437), but claimed that, unlike Sainte-Beuve, Gosse "seldom used his critical gifts to injure an enemy," adding that "his personal prejudices did not make him unsafe as a guide among the living" (441). Charteris also quotes Gosse's letter to F. C. Roe of 19 Mar 1924, which declares: "I am the disciple of one man, and of one man only – Sainte-Beuve. No one else has been my master" (478).

36. In "To Criticize the Critic" (1961), TSE refers to Sainte-Beuve as "the author of two important books, *Port-Royal* and *Chateaubriand et ses amis*." TSE owned a seven-volume edition of Sainte-Beuve's *Port-Royal* (1869-71).

37. In his introduction to *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), TSE observes: "The restless demon in us drives us also to 'interpret' whether we will or not" (4.148).

38. Edward VII was King of the United Kingdom and the British Dominions from 1901 to 1910.

A review of *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence*, by J. Middleton Murry

London: Jonathan Cape, 1931. Pp. 400.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 10 (July 1931) 769-74

Mr. Murry has written a brilliant book.[1] It seems to me the best piece of sustained writing that Mr. Murry has done. At any rate, I think that I understand it better than most of his recent writings. It is a definitive work of critical biography, or biographical criticism. It is so well done that it gives me the creeps: probably these matters matter no longer to Lawrence himself; but any author still living might shudder to think of the possibility of such a book of destructive criticism being written about him after he is dead. But no one but Mr. Murry could have done it; and I doubt whether Mr. Murry himself could do it about anyone but Lawrence. The victim and the sacrificial knife are perfectly adapted to each other.

Near the beginning Mr. Murry says:

> If Lawrence is to be judged as the "pure artist," then it is true that he never surpassed, and barely equalled, this rich and moving record of a life (*Sons and Lovers*). But Lawrence is not to be judged as a pure artist; if ever a writer had "an axe to grind" it was he. Set in the perspective – the only relevant perspective – of his own revealed intentions, *Sons and Lovers* appears as the gesture of a man who makes the heroic effort to liberate himself from the matrix of his own past. [23]

This is true. But I am doubtful what the term "pure artist" means to Mr. Murry; and I am doubtful whether this criticism is praise or condemnation. I agree that Lawrence was not a "pure artist," in that he never succeeded in making a work of art; but then, that is just relative failure, that is all. And if he was not trying to make a work of art, then he should have been: the less artist, the less prophet; Isaiah succeeded in being both. And to be a "pure artist" is by no means incompatible with having "an axe to grind"; Virgil and Dante had plenty of axes on the grindstone; Dickens and George Eliot are often at their best as artists when they are grinding axes; and Flaubert is no exception. Unless there was grinding of axes, there would be very little to write about. Mr. Murry quotes a sentence of Gourmont which I have quoted myself: *ériger en lois ses impressions personnelles, c'est le grand effort d'un homme s'il est sincère.*[2] Well, Lawrence tried to do that, certainly, but to my mind he failed completely, and this book is the history of his failure. Lawrence simply did not know how. He had plenty of sensations, undoubtedly; no man of his time was more sensitive; but he could neither leave his sensations alone and accept them simply as they came, nor could he generalize them correctly. The false prophet kills the true artist.

Lawrence had the making of an artist, more than one might suppose from reading this book. Mr. Murry quotes with astonishing accuracy and justice – I do not believe that there is a single quotation in the book which is mutilated or unfair to the subject, and such justice is very rare in criticism – but it is not part of his intention to insist upon Lawrence's successes as a writer at those moments when Lawrence was not occupied with the fatal task of self-justification. Not only are there magnificent descriptions here and there, everywhere, throughout Lawrence's work, but there are marvellous passages – in nearly every book, I believe – of dialogue or narrative, in which Lawrence really gets out of himself and inside other people. There is a fine episode in the life of an elementary schoolmistress in *The Rainbow*; there are one or two remarkable dialogues in *Aaron's Rod*; and there is a short story called "Two Blue Birds" which has no relation to Lawrence's own emotional disease, and in which he states a situation which no one else has ever put. Mr. Murry is fully able to appreciate these achievements, but he is fairly enough not concerned with them in this book. But to me they indicate that Lawrence ought to have been a "pure artist," but was impure. And I wonder also whether, had Lawrence been a success in this sense instead of a failure, Mr. Murry would have been so interested in him.

What Mr. Murry shows, and demonstrates with a terrible pertinacity throughout Lawrence's work, is the emotional dislocation of a "mother-complex." (It should show also how inappropriate is the common designation of "Oedipus complex.")[3] And he makes clear that Lawrence was pretty well aware of what was wrong; and that Lawrence, throughout the rest of his life, was a strange mixture of sincerity or *clairvoyance* with self-deception – or rather with the effort towards self-deception. Lawrence's subsequent history, and the history of his novels, is accordingly a record of his various attempts to kid himself into believing that he was right to be as he was, and that the rest of the world was wrong. It is an appalling narrative of spiritual pride, nourished by ignorance, and possibly also by the consciousness of great powers and humble birth. Now, the "mother-complex" of Lawrence does not seem to me in itself a sign of the times. I find it difficult to believe that a family life like that of Lawrence's parents is peculiar either to a particular class or to a particular age. Such family life, with such consequences to a sensitive child, can hardly have taken place only in the latter part of the nineteenth century. What is peculiar to the time is the way in which Lawrence tried to deal with his peculiarity. That is what is modern, and it seems to me to spring from ignorance.

When I use the word ignorance I am not contrasting it with something which is popularly called "education." Had Lawrence been sent to a public school and taken honours at a university he would not have been a jot the less ignorant; had he become a don at Cambridge his ignorance might have had frightful consequences for himself and for the world, "rotten and rotting others."[4] What true education should do – and true education would include the suitable education for every class of society – is to develop a wise and large capacity for orthodoxy, to preserve the individual from the solely centrifugal impulse of heresy, to make him capable of judging for himself and at the same time capable of judging and understanding the judgments of the experience of the race. I do not think that the unfortunate initial experience of Lawrence's life led *necessarily* to the consequences that came. He would probably have been always an unhappy man in this world; there is nothing unusual about that; many people have to be unhappy in this world, to do without things which seem essential and a matter of course to the majority; and some learn not to make a fuss about it, and to gain, or at least to strive towards, a kind of peace which Lawrence never knew. He is to be grieved over and his faults are to be extenuated; but we can hardly praise a man for his failure. It is by the adoption of a crazy theory to deal with the facts, that Lawrence seems modern, and what I mean by "ignorant."

I may make this clearer by instancing a peculiarity which to me is both objectionable and unintelligible. It is using the terminology of Christian faith to set forth some philosophy or religion which is fundamentally non-Christian or anti-Christian.[5] It is a habit towards which Mr. Lawrence has inclined his two principal disciples, Mr. Murry himself and Mr. Aldous Huxley. The variety of costumes into which these three talented artists have huddled the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in their various charades, is curious and to me offensive.[6] Perhaps if I had been brought up in the shadowy Protestant underworld within which they all seem gracefully to move, I might have more sympathy and understanding; I was brought up outside the Christian Fold, in Unitarianism; and in the form of Unitarianism in which I was instructed, things were either black or white. The Son and the Holy Ghost were not believed in, certainly; but they were entitled to respect as entities in which many other people believed, and they were not to be employed as convenient phrases to embody any cloudy private religion. I mention this autobiographical detail simply to indicate that it is possible for unbelievers as well as believers to consider this sort of loose talk to be, at the best, in bad taste. The Holy Ghost does not figure in Mr. Murry's index of fictitious personages at the end of the book, but that surely is an oversight.

A better illustration of Lawrence's "ignorance," and a fault which corrupts his whole philosophy of human relations – which is hardly anything but a philosophy of human relations and unrelations – is his hopeless attempt to find some mode in which two persons – of the opposite sex, and then as a venture of despair, of the same sex – may be spiritually united. As Mr. Murry spares no pains to show, the whole history of Lawrence's life and of Lawrence's writings (Mr. Murry tells us that it is the same history) is the history of his craving for greater intimacy than is possible between human beings, a craving irritated to the point of frenzy by his unusual incapacity for being intimate at all. His struggle against over-intellectualized life is the history of his own over-intellectualized nature. Even in his travels to more primitive lands, he could never take the crude peoples simply for what they are; he must needs always be expecting something of them that they could not give, something peculiarly medicinal for himself. He was looking for it there, just as he looked within the men and women he knew, without finding it. Other men and women have needs of their own. There is a passage from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (one of the novels which I have not read) which Mr. Murry quotes very much to the point.

> I held forth with rapture to her, positively with rapture. I simply went up in smoke. And she adored me. The serpent in the grass was sex. She somehow didn't have any; at least, not where it's supposed to be. I got thinner and thinner. Then I said we'd got to be lovers. I talked her into it. So she let me. I was excited, and she never wanted it. She adored me, she loved me to talk to her and kiss her: in that way she had a passion for me. But the other she just didn't want. And there are lots of women like her. And it was just the other that I *did* want. So there we split. I was cruel and left her. [362]

Mr. Murry has analysed this passage so shrewdly that it is an impertinence to say much more;[7] but I should like to be sure that it shocked Mr. Murry, as a confession, as deeply as it shocks me.[8] Such complacent egotism can come only from a very sick soul, and, I should say, from a man who was totally incapable of intimacy. The girl was obviously in love with him, in the way appropriate to her youth and inexperience; and it was not good enough for Lawrence. What a pity that he did not understand the simple truth that of any two human beings each has privacies which the other cannot penetrate, and boundaries which the other must not transgress, and that yet human intimacy can be wonderful and life-giving: a truth well known to Christian thought, though we do not need to be Christians to understand it. And that the love of two human beings is only made perfect in the love of God.[9]* These are very old and simple truths indeed. But Lawrence, as I believe Mr. Murry says, remembered the second injunction of the Summary of the Law and hoped to practise it without recognizing the first.[10] And is not this same sad burden of the unsatisfactoriness of human relations wailed thinly by the corrupt characters in Mr. Murry's novels, as well as some of Mr. Huxley's?[11] It is the old story that you cannot get a quart out of a pint pot; and the astonishing fact that you cannot even get a pint out of it unless you fill it. As if human love could possibly be an end in itself! And all these sad young men try to believe in a spectral abstraction called Life; yet the occasional whiffs of sepulchral high spirits wafted from their limbo are chillier than the gloom.

There remains, however, one book, which I have not read, but which I judge from Mr. Murry's account to be worthy of the importance which Mr. Murry assigns to it: *Fantasia of the Unconscious*. It would appear that in this book Lawrence reached his culmination, and that his subsequent work marks chiefly decline and collapse.[12]

> As Lawrence says, there is a great fascination in a completely effected "idealism," that is, in a completely achieved mental consciousness of our own natures. To this fascination the modern world is succumbing; this is, indeed, the distinguishing mark of the modern world – that which makes it modern.
>
> Lawrence was more deeply involved in this process than any other man. It is quite wrong, totally mistaken, to conceive of him as a sort of primitive emergence. He belonged, completely, to the modern world and its "idealism"; the intensity of his revulsion against it is the index

> of the completeness of his identification with it. Where he differed from the vast majority of intellectuals and "idealists" was that his ultra-sensitive organism was early aware of the fearful perils that lay along this seemingly inevitable road of complete mentality. [177]

This seems to me important, sound and well put. Yet it would seem that Lawrence only differed from the "vast majority of intellectuals" in his greater intellectual vision; in a fluctuating ability of diagnosis, without the further and total ability of prescription and régime. That, in my view, is only to be found – and only in our time with great difficulty if at all – in Christian discipline and asceticism. To this Lawrence could not and would not come; hence his relapse into pride and hatred.

One must, in considering a writer like Lawrence, confess what will be called one's prejudices, and leave the rest to the reader. I agree with Mr. Murry that there must have been a great deformed capacity for love in the man; he hungered and thirsted for love though he could not give it and could not take it. Mr. Murry's comparison and contrast of Lawrence with Jesus strikes cold upon my imagination,[13] though I could have understood a comparison with Rousseau.[14] Unwillingly in part, I admit that this is a great tragic figure, a waste of great powers of understanding and tenderness. We may feel poisoned by the atmosphere of his world, and quit it with relief; but we cannot deny our homage as we retire. A fateful influence he must have been upon those who experienced his power; I cannot help wondering whether Mr. Murry was not compelled to write his book in order to expel the demon from himself; and if so, I wonder whether Mr. Murry has succeeded.[15]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In Mar 1931, TSE received a copy of *Son of Woman* from the new editors of the *Adelphi* in the hope that he would contribute an article on Lawrence. However, TSE decided to review it for the *Criterion*, informing Richard Rees on 2 Apr, "I am immensely interested in the book, and think it one of the most brilliant pieces of writing that Murry has done" (*L5* 532). On 6 Apr, TSE wrote to Montgomery Belgion, "Murry's book on Lawrence is an interesting, if rather ghoulish study, and I want to write about it myself – it throws more light on Murry, however, than on Lawrence" (*L5* 356).

2. Murry gives the sentence from Gourmont only in English translation: "the whole effort of a sincere man is to make his personal impressions into universal laws" (163). TSE quoted the sentence in French as an epigraph to "The Perfect Critic" (1920) (2:262).

3. In *Reminiscences of D. H. Lawrence* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1933), Murry recalled discussing "Oedipus complexes and incest-motives" with Lawrence (33).

4. The Cambridge don and critic F. R. Leavis recalled that he "was widely supposed – at Cambridge, anyway, where it mattered – to share the honour of the intention [of 'rotting others'] with Lawrence." *D. H. Lawrence: Novelist* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1955), 325. Leavis believed that TSE visited him in Cambridge in 1941 to expatiate a sense of guilt regarding this insinuation.

5. TSE develops his attack on Lawrence in *ASG* where he is characterized as "an almost perfect example of the heretic" (38).

6. Murry: "What is the Holy Ghost, then, according to Lawrence? The Holy Ghost is that which unites the eternal opposites of the spirit which is love, and the flesh which is hatred" (100).

7. Murry comments: "The sexual youth of Mellors is Lawrence's own youth: there is barely an effort at disguise" (362). Murry conflates the gamekeeper Mellors's account of this love affair and Lawrence's complex relationship with the young woman called Miriam in *Sons and Lovers*, in real-life Jessie Chambers.

8. TSE wrote to Murry on 8 July 1931: "You speak of having been just as much shocked by the passage from *Lady Chatterley's Lover* as I am, but having come to see the whole matter from a further point of view beyond good and evil. I still cannot see how the point of view beyond good and evil can affect one's opinion of the rightness or wrongness of a specific instance of human behaviour of this sort" (*L5* 609).

9*. TSE's note: "To many human pairs, of course, common tastes, or a common interest, as in Tariff Reform or the enfranchisement of African natives, may appear an excellent substitute."

10. TSE refers to Jesus's two commandments: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" and "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Matthew 22:37, 39).

11. Murry was the author of three novels: *Still Life* (1916), *The Things We Are* (1922) and *The Voyage* (1924). On 8 Oct 1931, TSE told Desmond MacCarthy that while he mostly agreed with his view of Lawrence and Huxley, "I feel that Aldous is lacking in some element essential to a mature mind" (*L5* 336).

12. Murry says of Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922): "It marks the zenith of his mortal course" (19).

13. Murry's concluding chapter, "The Man Who Had Died," contains an extended comparison of Lawrence and Jesus, offering the assertion: "in Lawrence's eyes, Jesus and himself are inevitably and irrevocably damned to imperfection, unless the miracle of a physical resurrection and a second bodily life is vouchsafed to them" (375).

14. Referring to Lawrence's "persecution-mania" during World War I, Murry notes: "He had as good an excuse as Jean-Jacques Rousseau" (126).

15. Murry ends *Son of Woman* by asking Lawrence's ghost: "In this book have I betrayed you?" (388). Responding to gossip about the emotional ending of this study, Virginia Woolf noted on 15 Apr that Murry "has written a book about D. H. Lawrence, making out that he is Judas and Lawrence, Christ" (*Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, vol 4, ed. Warren Roberts, James T. Boulton, and Elizabeth Mansfield, Cambridge UP, 1987, 312). On 8 July, TSE responded to Murry's "kindly and tolerant appreciation of my review" (*L5* 609).

A review of *Essays of a Catholic Layman in England*, by Hilaire Belloc

London: Sheed & Ward, 1931. Pp. 320.

The English Review, 53 (July 1931) 245-46[1]

Perhaps the most painful criticism one has to make of Mr. Belloc's polemical essays is that he has suffered through devoting much labour to combating very stupid people.[2] He could reasonably reply that he found the stupidity there; and that when it is the stupidity of such intelligent, ignorant, and extremely active men as Mr. Wells and Mr. Shaw, it is a very serious matter, and must be met on its own ground, with its own weapons, and before its own audience.[3] And looking at the situation from another point of view, the spectacle of Mr. Belloc now whirling his long-sword, and thundering his denunciations, over an almost deserted battlefield, is quite agreeable to watch. Yet the two weakest among this collection of essays are those in which he goes direct at Mr. Haldane and the Dean of St. Paul's.[4] The trouble is perhaps that one ought to take infinite pains in attacking even the meanest antagonist; and if Mr. Haldane and Dean Inge are worth so much attention – which need not be assumed – they are worth a little more.[5] When Mr. Belloc attached himself tenaciously to Mr. Wells's *Outline*, he provided good sport and did good service; but here his hand is a bit heavy, and his weapon rather blunt.[6]

But if few of Mr. Belloc's individual enemies are as powerful as they seemed thirty years ago, the issues with which he is concerned are as perilous as ever. His peculiar function is to attack, not arguments, but *prejudices*; and prejudices are attacked, not with arguments, but with *convictions*. Those readers who are in sympathy with him – at least, on what seem to them the vital issues – will not be wholly satisfied. For instance, one of the most important subjects in the book, at the present time, is the secularization of the school system of England, and this essay on *The Schools* is to be commended.[7] Those who already share Mr. Bell's apprehensions are prepared for a more advanced discussion.[8] But such an essay, and most of the essays, are for the direction of those readers, an important number, who have an open mind, but have not yet begun to think.

It would be pleasant to the reviewer if the convictions which he shared with Mr. Belloc were so generally accepted that he could afford to devote his time to those points where he finds himself in disagreement; it is unhappily not so. Among the good points which Mr. Belloc makes, which will have to be made again and again, are particularly two. One is that *religious* differences are at least as important as racial, linguistic or geographical.[9] It is a misfortune that Britain and some of the most important parts of Europe have been governed largely by men without strong religious convictions; because it is precisely such men who are most likely to make errors in foreign and colonial policy by underrating, or by being unable to sympathize with, the religious convictions of others. And the other point is that the accepted antithesis between Capitalism and Socialism is no more the ultimate division of political philosophies than the superannuate antithesis between Conservatism and Liberalism.[10] It is the Fabians who have apotheosized "Capitalism."[11] Mr. Belloc cannot remind us too often that there are older, as well as newer political philosophies; or that there is a science more fundamental than the sciences of psychology and economics, and without which they are vain: the science of ethics.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. This is the second of three reviews TSE wrote for Douglas Jerrold's *English Review* during 1931.

2. Belloc makes frequent recourse to the "stupidity" of contemporary critics, defined as follows: "One test of intelligence being, the power to separate distinct categories, the corresponding test of stupidity is inability to do so" (154).

3. In 1926, Belloc was involved in a public controversy with H. G. Wells over what he considered to be the anti-Catholic bias of Wells's bestseller *The Outline of History* (1920). Belloc stated his strong objections in *A Companion to Mr. Wells's "Outline of History"* (1926) and, following Wells's rejoinder *Mr. Belloc Objects to "The Outline of History"* (1926), again in *Mr. Belloc Still Objects to Mr. Wells's "Outline of History"* (1926). In the volume here reviewed, Belloc refers in passing to Wells's confusion of the Catholic doctrines of "The Immaculate Conception" and "Nativity" (269).

Belloc chaired public debates between Shaw and Chesterton published as *Do We Agree?* (1928). In "Shaw Pillories Chesterton and Belloc," Shaw had coined the term "Chesterbelloc" to lampoon these two conservative Catholic opponents of his socialism, adding that Belloc was "a bit of a rowdy" (*New York Times*, 9 Feb 1908, SM1).

4. In "An Article of Mr. Haldane's," Belloc rejects J. B. S. Haldane's contention that Catholics are fighting a rearguard action against modern intellectual life, observing: "A completely indifferent and detached mind, surveying Europe as a whole, can only conclude that

the Catholic side is advancing" (271). In "A Letter to Dean Inge," Belloc complains that Dean Inge's column in the *Evening Standard* has "often attacked (and defamed) the Catholic Church" and concludes: "In truth, it is not the constitution of the [Catholic] Church you abhor, but the thing itself – little though you know that thing" (303).

5. On 27 Jan 1932, TSE wrote to Pound regarding Haldane: "I always thought of him as a popular biologist distinctly superior to Julian Huxley but that is not saying much." Beginning with his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1924 (2:523), TSE repeatedly criticized Dean Inge's column in the *Evening Standard*.

6. In "Popular Theologians" (1927), TSE comments on the success of Belloc's attacks on Wells's *The Outline of History* (1926) (3.63) and yet concludes after contemplating their public exchange: "We distrust them both; we agree with them both" (3.64).

7. Belloc's essay on "The Schools" proposed that "The Catholic schools have a rightful claim to complete independence from the anti-Catholic state under which they exist" (237), contending that Catholics' principled opposition to state schooling is vital: "We should state our full claim and never compromise on the full doctrine behind it. . . . For upon the schools depends the continuance of the Faith" (254-55).

8. In *Civilization* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1928), Clive Bell expressed his apprehension about technical instruction undermining the importance of a liberal humanist education: "It has its importance; it is well that boys should be taught how to get the greatest possible amount of milk out of six cows, and that girls should learn book-keeping. . . . For the rest, it is confusing to honour the inculcation of what is merely a means to 'getting on' with the name of 'education' which is a 'drawing out' – the drawing out of our subtlest and most delicate powers. . . . [A] liberal education will not help anyone to 'get on' or 'make good' – in precise English, to make money – but to understand life and enjoy its finer pleasures" (172-73). TSE reviewed Bell's *Civilization* in the *Criterion* for Sept 1928 (3.479).

9. In "The Two Cultures of the West," Belloc argues: "The true line of cleavage in Europe does not run between the various states, still less between various groups of languages, and not at all between various racial groups; Western Europe is essentially divided into two cultural groups, the difference between which has its own origin in difference of religion" (307), concluding that the difference between Protestant and Catholic cultures "is the main difference dividing one sort of European from another" (311).

10. In "The Faith and Industrial Capitalism," Belloc argues: "The remedy for the evils of Industrial Capitalism will not be found in any Socialistic action or theory developed under the very same false philosophy as produced Industrial Capitalism" (285). In "Political Theorists" (1927), TSE discusses Belloc's severe critique of capitalism and socialism in the course of his review of a new edition of *The Servile State* (first published in 1912) (3.138-39).

11. In his recent *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1931, TSE outlined his objections to *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (4.305).

The Modern Dilemma
Syllabus for Four BBC Broadcasts[1]

One important characteristic of the "problems of the present time" – as it appears at least, to us who are concerned with them – is that they do not form a list of separate problems each to be dealt with by the appropriate specialist; but we feel instinctively before we have even thought about them, that they form together one single problem, affecting the interests of the whole of humanity. Our difficulties [are] those of an age which feels the need of synthesis. Hence anyone who thinks seriously about contemporary affairs, whatever be his special vocation or competence, is led to the same ultimate questions. (That at least is my own excuse for discussing matters which at first sight lie outside of my own profession and my own knowledge). Our age [is] not afflicted by the collapse of religious belief, but by something much more serious in its possible consequences – the collapse of religious disbelief. A period during which religion is decaying is comparatively easy to live in. People who are engaged in work of destruction can easily be satisfied with themselves; for some small, though usually conspicuous part of what they are destroying is something that ought to be destroyed, and, it is of this part that they are most aware. They can, therefore, call their destructive work by the name of enlightenment and progress. A child employs itself happily in taking an old alarm clock to pieces, but even a child is disappointed when all the parts are separate and it finds that it cannot put the clock together again. In a dissociative and analytic period each man has his own little job of taking something to pieces, a job which is not beyond his powers. One characteristic of our time is that we are dimly aware that the work to be done seems beyond our powers. That, we feel is because the old distinctions of function are now confused. The work of the good statesman of tomorrow has wider scope, and demands more fundamental understanding than the work of the best statesman of yesterday. The modern scientist has a much more delicate task than that of the old fashioned rationalist. The artist and the man of letters is impelled to question the nature of [his] function, and to ask himself what he is doing and why and how it fits in with the work of the rest of the world.

I begin, therefore, with the activity which I may be assumed to know most about – that of writing poetry. Often claimed that poetry is, or should be, concerned with permanent things, and not with affairs of the day; on the other hand, it is sometimes asserted that the poet is the consciousness of his time and makes other men more conscious.[2] I do not think that poets themselves often bother to make either of these claims – even when they do, we need not be more credulous of what poets say than of what other people say – but there is some truth in both. But for that matter, we all, so far as we address our fellow men, are concerned with both the eternal and the temporal. Poetry cannot ever concern itself with simple emotions which are supposed to be the same always; such "emotions" are "simple" only by being purely abstract. Subject matter and treatment cannot be wholly separated, but on one side or both, the poet must differ from his predecessors. As he must possess the information of his age, so he must think of the problems of his age, so far as he thinks at all, and both his knowledge and his thought as they enter into and become transformed in his poetry, will affect what he writes and differentiate it from the poetry of any other time. What are the differences of poetry to-day? one curious and by no means so trifling as it sounds. We all want to write long poems of one kind or another, and none of us in my opinion, has quite succeeded.[3] What does this mean? The desire springs from a profound need for a more comprehensive view of things. Nineteenth century poetry still able to be at length. Reasons why, and why we find reading long poems an effort to read, though no longer satisfied with short ones. How this leads to the religious question which is necessarily the social question also.

The literary problem in general. Why the novel dissatisfying, and why the more enterprising and sensitive novelists are reaching out towards something else. Need for "myth." The history of the novel is the history of an increasingly analytic epoch, which is now done with. (Popularity of detective fiction not in the least an indication of interest in crime, but of the desire to escape from the analytic consciousness into a more specialised analysis; so far as it is not merely a similar interest to that of the X-word puzzle. Should detective fiction be more lifelike, as Mrs. Sayers wishes? No, we cannot go back to Wilkie Collins and reverse history).[4] Significant tendencies of the literary critic to-day. Literary criticism tends towards philosophical, religious, social and psychological theory. (Murry, Lewis, Richards, Fernandez, Babbitt etc.) Mr. Richards' theory of poetry as a substitute for Belief.[5]

The man of letters and the social problem. Literature and the question of regionalism (Maurras, Ireland, Scotland, Southern States of America).[6] Literature and democracy, communism and fascism: why the man of letters must think of all those things, and what he thinks. The question of an elite. Literature should help to preserve both local consciousness and universal consciousness. Literature as an international force. Relation of literature to disintegration of social morality. Effect of emancipated morality upon emotion as the material of literature: the death of tragedy. Literature in the end dependent upon the supernatural.

NOTES

1. Unpublished TS in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. On 19 Aug 1931, the BBC's *Listener* magazine launched an Adult Education project to run from autumn 1931 to spring 1932 on the subject of "The Changing World": "a giant symposium to which men of letters, economists, scientists and philosophers are all to contribute" (318). On 29 Jun 1931, TSE replied to Charles Siepmann, Deputy Director of Programmes at the BBC, following an invitation to contribute to a series of talks together with the cultural historian Christopher Dawson and the moral philosopher John Macmurray under the title "The Modern Dilemma," remarking: "I am afraid I have no general suggestion to make until I have discussed matters with you and Dawson and Macmurray. My only suggestion at the moment is that perhaps the categories ought to be carefully subdivided, so that no two persons should appear as representative of quite the same point of view" (*L5* 601). TSE sent a rough draft of his talks on 12 July and then on 6 Aug wrote to Siepmann: "I enclose a new outline, which I hope is nearer the mark than the first one. What does not emerge from it, but what I think will issue in the talks, is that my position seems to be naturally in a *via media* between Dawson and Macmurray. Do you think furthermore that I ought to make the talks more concrete by dwelling on what is possible for each individual to do, with himself and in the world, here and now?" (*L5* 632). After receiving the full text of the broadcasts by Dawson and Macmurray, TSE substantially revised the content of his four talks. They were published in the *Listener* on 16 Mar 1932 (4.422), 23 Mar (4.436), 30 Mar (4.446), and 6 Apr (4.464). On 13 Apr, Macmurray published an appraisal of the series as a whole in the *Listener*. Plans to reprint all the broadcasts in book form with Allen & Unwin were abandoned.

2. TSE was familiar with this point of view from discussions with I. A. Richards, who asserted: "The artist is concerned with the record and perpetuation of the experiences which seem to him most worth having. . . . he is also the man who is most likely to have experiences of value to record. He is the point at which the growth of the mind shows itself." *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London, Routledge, 1925), 61.

3. On 22 May 1924, TSE told Virginia Woolf: "I feel myself that everything I have done consists simply of tentative sketches and rough experiments" (*L2* 430).

4. Dorothy Sayers (1893-1957), an admirer of Wilkie Collins, published a successful series of crime fictions featuring the detective Lord Peter Wimsey. TSE later met Sayers and possessed a copy of her translation of Dante, *The Comedy of Dante Alighieri, the Florentine* (1948). In

"Wilkie Collins and Dickens" (1927), TSE discusses the importance of Collins to the genre of detective fiction (3.164).

5. In "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930), TSE articulates his differences from Richards's reflections on poetry and belief (4.24).

6. TSE discusses the question of regionalism in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1931 (4.253).

Thomas Heywood[1]

There are a few of the Elizabethan dramatists, notably Marlowe and Ben Jonson, who always return to our minds with the reality of personal acquaintances. We know them unmistakably through their own writings – Jonson partly though his conversations with Drummond[2] – and by a few anecdotes of the kind which, even when apocryphal, remain as evidence of the personal impression that such men must have made upon their contemporaries. There are others whom we can remember only by the association of their names with a play, or a group of plays. Of all these men Thomas Heywood is one of the dimmest figures; and it is interesting to remark how very dim he still remains even after Dr. Clark's exhaustive industry.[3] Dr. Clark appears to have discovered and assembled all the information that we can ever expect to have; and it is certainly not his fault that Heywood makes still but a faint impression; in fact, Dr. Clark's book can help us considerably to understand why this is so. The book is solidly documentary; it is not, like some biographical essays with scanty material, stuffed out with appreciation and conjecture. It is, in fact, an admirable account of the life of a typical literary Jack of all trades of the epoch; the summary of Heywood's activities as a pamphleteer, with his works of what may be termed popular theology in the Puritan cause, is full of interest for anyone who cares about this lively and, in some respects, very remote age. And the book confirms the impression that Heywood – whom Dr. Clark shows convincingly to have been a Heywood of Mottram, in Cheshire, and not of the family of Heywood of Lincolnshire, the county of his birth – was a facile and sometimes felicitous purveyor of goods to the popular taste.[4]

Heywood's reputation, which we owe primarily to Lamb and Hazlitt, is founded on *A Woman Killed with Kindness*; but *The English Traveller* and *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* are not far below it; and the first part of the *The Fair Maid of the West*, when it has been performed – twice, we believe, in recent years – was revealed as a rollicking piece of popular patriotic sentiment.[5] Before considering whether this output has enough coherence to be treated with the dignity of an *œuvre*, there are several interesting attributions of Dr. Clark's which demand attention. The first and most important is *Appius and Virginia*.

The date of this play, which has long been a difficulty to the students of Webster – a play far below Webster's best work, and in some respects dissimilar to it – forms one of Dr. Clark's reasons for attributing the play primarily to Heywood.[6] This was, of course, the guess of Rupert Brooke; but, given the initial doubt which strikes any admirer of Webster, the opinion, when it comes from a close student of Heywood, has much stronger authority.[7] Dr. Clark, however, is not content to take issue only with Mr. Sykes (who gives the whole play to Webster),[8] though that is a serious task in itself. He dismisses, with hardly more attention than a few footnotes, the moderate and so far, we believe, impregnable view of Mr. F. L. Lucas. He refers, certainly, to Mr. Lucas's "attempt to depreciate Heywood" as "uncritical" [254]; because Mr. Lucas, in his introduction to the play in his complete edition of Webster, doubts whether Heywood

> could have produced unaided so well-planned and reasonable a play. For there is a peculiar oafish simplicity about him which made him unable ever to create a single piece, except perhaps *Edward IV*, which is not deformed by pages of utter drivel.[9]

Mr. Lucas has perhaps written with a heat uncommon among Elizabethan scholars, though refreshing; yet his doubt whether Heywood could have planned the play is one likely to strike anyone who reads both Webster and Heywood without prejudices. To such a reader, the fact that Heywood is the author of *The Rape of Lucrece* strains credulity to the breaking point.[10] But this, indeed, is the whole issue between Dr. Clark and Mr. Lucas. Neither doubts that both Heywood and Webster had a hand in the play; neither makes a claim for any third author. Dr. Clark concludes that Heywood wrote the play and that "at an unknown date Webster revised the play somewhat carelessly" [274]. Mr. Lucas can more easily believe that Webster wrote, or designed and partly wrote, the play, and that Heywood either revised or completed it. We are left with a narrow choice and a fine distinction; in fact, we are left to our personal impressions. The feeling of the present reviewer, at least, is that the structure of the play is more credibly assignable to Webster, as well as the good lines which nobody denies him.[11]

Our inclination to this conclusion is confirmed, if anything, by Dr. Clark's theory of Heywood's hand in *The Jew of Malta*.[12] It seems to us that here Dr. Clark's scholarly theory is really founded upon a critical presupposition. He holds a not uncommon view that "so far as [Marlowe's] conception of Barabas is concerned, the play might finish with the second act" [287]. But he adds, "so far as we know Marlowe invented the plot," which is a considerable concession; and also admits that there is a very little in Acts III, IV and V which Marlowe may have written. He says, "in the play we probably still have the main incidents as originally determined, but now crowded mostly into V to make room for certain ribaldry and gruesome farce" [288]. There is perhaps a little ribaldry which we should prefer not to attribute to Marlowe, and a kind of which Heywood was certainly capable; but the most "gruesome farce" is found in Act IV, Scenes i and ii; which the mere critic may maintain to be farce of a gruesomeness a cut above Heywood, and by no means unworthy of Marlowe. That the latter part of the play is garbled, few would doubt; that the writer who filled in the remains of Marlowe's play was Heywood, Dr. Clark makes out a good case; but mutilated and patched as the play probably is, we may still see in it a conception of Barabas which is by no means finished with the second act.[13]

The third of Dr. Clark's interesting ascriptions concerns *A Yorkshire Tragedy*.[14] This abrupt little play has been somewhat overrated, singularly so by Swinburne.[15] Dr. Clark's association of it with *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage*, and his explanation of its inconsistencies through this association, is an excellent piece of reasoning.[16] So far as the verse is concerned, the most of it is not too bad to be Heywood's, and the best line and a half –

> But you are playing in the angels' laps
> And will not look on me –[17]

strikes us as a *trouvaille* which might have been possible to Heywood. The best of the play is the part of the "little son":

> 'What, ail you, father? are you not well? I cannot scourge my top as long as you stand so: you take up all the room with your wide legs. Puh, you cannot make me afeard with this; I fear no vizards, nor bugbears'–[18]

and as we cannot allege any other minor dramatist as more competent to have written this touching dialogue than Heywood, we are hardly in a strong position to refuse it to him. This then, we think, is the most valuable of Dr. Clark's ascriptions.

None of these attributions, interesting as is the last of them in itself, can make very much difference to our estimate of Heywood as a dramatist and a poet; and it is upon the indisputable plays that we found our opinion of him. These indisputable plays exhibit what may be called the minimum degree of unity. Similar subject-matter and treatment appear in several; the same stage skill, the same versifying ability. The sensibility is merely that of ordinary people in ordinary life – which is the reason, perhaps, why Heywood is misleadingly called a "realist."[19] Behind the motions of his personages, the shadows of the human world, there is no reality of moral synthesis; to inform the verse there is no vision, none of the artist's power to give undefinable unity to the most various material. In the work of nearly all of those of his contemporaries who are as well known as he there is at least some inchoate pattern; there is, as it would often be called, personality. Of those of Heywood's plays which are worth reading, each is worth reading for itself, but none throws any illumination upon any other.

Heywood's versification is never on a very high poetic level, but at its best is often on a high dramatic level. This can be illustrated by one of the best known of quotations from *A Woman Killed with Kindness*:

O speak no more!
For more than this I know, and have recorded
Within the red-leaved table of my heart.
Fair, and of all beloved, I was not fearful
Bluntly to give my life into your hand,
And at one hazard all my earthly means.
Go, tell you husband; he will turn me off,
And I am then undone. I care not, I;
'Twas for your sake. Perchance in rage he'll kill me,
I care not, 'twas for you. Say I incur
The general name of villain through the world,
Of traitor to my friend; I care not, I.
Beggary, shame, death, scandal, and reproach,
For you I'll hazard all: why, what care I?
For you I'll live, and in your love I'll die.[20]

The image at the beginning of this passage does not, it is true, deserve its fame. "Table of my heart" is a legitimate, though hardly striking, metaphor; but to call it *red-leaved* is to press the anatomical aspect into a ridiculous figure. It is not a conceit, as when Crashaw deliberately telescopes one image into another, but merely the irreflective grasping after a fine trope. But in the lines that follow the most skilful use is made of regular blank verse to emphasize the argument; and it is, even to the judicious couplet at the end, a speech which any actor should be happy to declaim. The speech is perfect for the situation; the most persuasive that Wendoll could have made to Mrs. Frankford; and it persuades us into accepting her surrender. And this instance of verse which is only moderately poetical but very highly dramatic is by no means singular in Heywood's work.

And undeniably Heywood was not without skill in the construction of plays. It is unreasonable to complain of *A Woman Killed with Kindness* that it is improbable that a woman who has lived very happily with her husband and child should suddenly and easily be seduced by a man who had been living in the house the whole time; we consider that the seduction is made extremely plausible.[21] What is perhaps clumsy is the beginning superfluously by a scene directly after the marriage of the Frankfords, instead of by a scene marking the happiness of the pair up to the moment of Wendoll's declaration. Sufficient verisimilitude is maintained to the end; we accept the Elizabethan convention of very quick death from heartbreak; and the last scene is really affecting.[22] It is true that Mistress Frankford's words:

> Out of my zeal to Heaven, whither now I'm bound,[23]

Seem to rely upon some curiously unorthodox theology; and even if death from broken heart secures the remission of sins, it hardly became Mrs. Frankford to be so certain of it. But such a moral sentiment is perhaps not unique in the ethics of Elizabethan drama; and other small touches in the play, such as the finding of the guitar, well deserve the praise they have received.[24] It is in the underplot, as in some other plays, that Heywood is least skilful.[25] This theme – a man ready to prostitute his sister as payment for a debt of honour – is too grotesque even to horrify us; but it is too obviously there merely because an underplot is required to fill out the play for us to feel anything but boredom when it recurs.[26] Middleton's *The Changeling*, in every other respect a far finer play, must share with *A Woman Killed with Kindness* the discredit of having the weakest underplot of any important play in the whole Elizabethan repertory.

Indeed, Heywood suffers from one great handicap in attempting to write underplots at all – he was gifted with very little sense of humour, and therefore could not fall back upon the comic for the purpose. In attempting to be amusing he sometimes has recourse, as other men than harried playwrights have been known to do, to the lowest bawdiness, which leaves us less with a sense of repugnance for the man who could write it than with a sense of pity for the man who could think of nothing better. Here and there, in *The Wise Woman of Hogsdon* for instance, he succeeds with something not too far below Jonson to be comparable to that master's work; the wise woman herself, and her scene with her clientèle, are capitally done, and earn for Heywood the title of "realist" if any part of his work can. The scene of the unmasking of Young Chartley must be excellent fun when played. The underplot of *The English Traveller*, on the other hand, is a clumsy failure to do that in which only Jonson could have succeeded. But Heywood has no imaginative humour; and as he has so often been spoken of in the same breath with Dekker, that is a comparison which may justly be made.[27] Just as Bess, the Fair Maid of the West, is a purely melodramatic figure beside the heroine of *The Roaring Girl*, so Heywood could no more have created the character of Cuddie Banks, in *The Witch*, than he could have written the magnificent tirade (a tirade which, if anything can, goes to prove that Middleton wrote *The Revenger's Tragedy*)[28] which Middleton puts into the mouth of the chief character in the same play.[29] Cuddie Banks, loving the dog whom he knows to be a devil, but loving him as dog while reproving him as devil, is worthy to rank with clowns of Shakespeare; he is not "realistic," he is true.[30]

It was in *The English Traveller* that Heywood found his best plot. Possibly the elder critics disapproved of the heroine's plighting herself to marry her admirer as soon as her elderly husband should die; but it is far less offensive to modern taste than many other situations in Elizabethan drama, and it is one which a modern novelist – not perhaps a quite modern novelist, but a Stendhal – might have made the most of. It is indeed a plot especially[31†] modern among Elizabethan plots; for the refinement of agony of the virtuous lover who has controlled his passion and then discovers that his lady has deceived both her husband, who is his friend, and himself, is really more poignant than the torment of the betrayed husband Frankford. The strange situation *à quatre*, Master Wincott and his wife, young Geraldine and his faithless companion Delavil – and old Geraldine neatly worked into the pattern as well – is not only well thought of but well thought out; and it is delicately phrased:

> Y. GER Your husband's old, to whom my soul doth wish
> A Nestor's, age, so much he merits from me;
> Yet if (as proof and Nature daily teach
> Men cannot always live, especially
> Such as are old and crazed) he be called hence,
> Fairly, in full maturity of time,
> And we two be reserved to after life,

Will you confer your widowhood on me?
WIFE. You ask the thing I was about to beg;
Your tongue hath spoke mine own thoughts. . . .
WIFE. Till that day come, you shall reserve yourself
A single man; converse nor company
With any woman, contract nor combine
With maid or widow; which expected hour
As I do wish not haste, so when it happens
It shall not come unwelcome. You hear all;
Vow this.
Y GER. By all that you have said, I swear,
And by this kiss confirm.
WIFE. You're now my brother;
But then, my second husband.[32]

It could not have been done better. As in the passage from *A Woman Killed with Kindness* quoted above, the verse, which nowhere bursts into a flame of poetry, is yet economical and tidy, and formed to extract all the dramatic value possible from the situation. And it is by his refinement of sentiment, by his sympathetic delicacy in these two plays that Heywood deserves, and well deserves, to be remembered; for here he has accomplished what none of his contemporaries succeeded in accomplishing.

Yet we must concede that the interest is always sentimental, and never ethical. One has seen plays in our time which are just the sort of thing that Heywood would have written had he been our contemporary. It is usual for inferior authors at any time to accept whatever morality is current, because they are interested not to analyse the ethics but to exploit the sentiment. Mrs. Frankford yields to her seducer with hardly a struggle, and her decline and death are a tribute to popular sentiment; not, certainly, a vindication of inexorable moral law.[33] She is in the sentimental tradition which peopled a period of nineteenth-century fiction with Little Em'lys; and which, if it now produces a generation of rather robuster heroines, has yet made no moral advance, because it has no vital relation to morals at all.[34] For a Corneille or a Racine, the centre of interest in the situation of Mrs. Frankford or Mrs. Wincott would have been the moral conflict leading up to the fall; and even the absence of conflict, as in the seduction of Mathilde (if seduction it can be called) in *Le Rouge et le Noir*, can be treated by a moralist.[35] The capital distinction is that between representation of human actions which have moral reality and representation of such as have only sentimental reality; and beside this, any distinction between "healthy" and "morbid" sentiment is trivial. It is well enough to speak of Heywood, as does Dr. Clark, as "a man of tender charity . . . ever kindly to the fallen and with a gift of homely pathos and simple poetry" [231]; though it does less than justice to Heywood to describe his pathos as "homely" (for the famous pathos of "Nan, Nan!" is no homelier than Lear's "Never, never, never, never, never", though far below it).[36] What matters is not whether Heywood was inspired by tender charity, but whether his actual productions are any more edifying, any more moral, than what Dr. Clark would call "the slippery ethics" of Fletcher, Massinger, and Ford.[37]

The ethics of most of the greater Elizabethan dramatists is only intelligible as leading up to, or deriving from, that of Shakespeare: it has its significance, we mean, only in the light of Shakespeare's fuller revelation. There is another type of ethics, that of the satirist. In Shakespeare's work it is represented most nearly by *Timon* and *Troilus*, but for a mind with such prodigious capacity of development as Shakespeare's, the snarling vein could not endure. The kind of satire which is approached in *The Jew of Malta* reaches perhaps its highest point with *Volpone*; but it is a kind to which also approximates much of the work of Middleton and Tourneur, men who as writers must he counted morally higher than Fletcher or Ford or Heywood.[38]

> These by enchantments can whole lordships change
> To trunks of rich attire, turn ploughs and teams
> To Flanders mares and coaches, and huge trains
> Of servitors to a French butterfly.
> Have you not [seen] city-witches who can turn
> Their husbands' wares, whole standing shops of wares,
> To sumptuous tables, gardens of stolen sin;
> In one year wasting what scarce twenty win?
> Are not these witches?[39]

That dolorous aspect of human nature which in comedy is best portrayed by Molière, though Jonson and even Wycherley have the same burden, appears again and again in the tragic drama of Middleton and Tourneur. Without denying to Heywood what Dr. Clark attributes to him, a sense of "the pity of it," we can find a profounder sense of the "pity of it" in the lines quoted above which Middleton gives to the Witch of Edmonton.[40]

Heywood's sense of pity is genuine enough, but it is only the kind of pity that the ordinary playgoer, of any time, can appreciate. Heywood's is a drama of common life, not, in the highest sense, tragedy at all; there is no supernatural music from behind the wings. He would in any age have been a successful playwright; he is eminent in the pathetic, rather than the tragic. His nearest approach to those deeper emotions which shake the veil of Time is in that fine speech of Frankford which surely no man or woman past their youth can read without a twinge of personal feeling:

> O God! O God! that it were possible
> To undo things done; to call back yesterday. . . .[41]

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally "Thomas Heywood," *TLS*, 1539 (30 July 1931) 589-90, an anonymous review of *Thomas Heywood: Playwright and Miscellanist* by A. M. Clark (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1931). Pp. 356. Completed before May (see TSE to Bruce Richmond, 4 May 1931). On 13 Mar 1929, TSE discussed with Richmond a proposed *TLS* review of Otelia Cromwell's *Thomas Heywood: A Study in the Elizabethan Drama of Everyday Life* (1928), but he did not review it.

2. On his visit to Scotland in 1618-19, Ben Jonson stayed with William Drummond of Hawthornden for almost three weeks. Drummond's notes on their conversations were first published in 1842.

3. Thomas Heywood (ca. 1573-1641) playwright, poet, and actor. In the "Address to the Reader" of *The English Traveller* (London: Raworth, 1633), Heywood claimed he had "either an entire hand or at least a main finger" in 220 plays.

Arthur Melville Clark (1895-1961), lecturer in English at the University of Edinburgh, was the author of *A Bibliography of Thomas Heywood* (1925).

4. In *The Age of Shakespeare* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1908), Swinburne commented on Heywood's commercialism: "A purveyor of this kind of ware" (241).

5. Charles Lamb referred to Heywood as a "sort of prose Shakespeare" in *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets, Who Lived about the Time of Shakespeare* (London: Longman, 1808, 99-123). William Hazlitt discussed Heywood in his *Lectures Chiefly on the Dramatic Literature of the Age of Elizabeth* (1820).

The Wise Woman of Hogsdon (1638); *A Woman Killed with Kindness* (1607); *The English Traveller* (1633); *The Fair Maid of the West*, two parts (1631).

The Fair Maid of the West, Part 1, was revived in Apr 1920 at the Lyric Theatre, Hammersmith, by the Phoenix Society at a time when TSE publicly supported this theatre company. The play had also been performed by the Yale Dramatic Association in Apr 1901.

6. *Appius and Virginia* was first printed in 1654 and attributed by the publisher Richard Marriot to John Webster. The editors of the Cambridge edition of John Webster observe: "No evidence has been found by which *Appius and Virginia* might be precisely dated." *The Complete Works of John Webster*, vol 3, ed. David Gunby, David Carnegie and MacDonald P. Jackson (Cambridge UP, 2003), 443.

7. Rupert Brooke concluded it was "impossible to believe that *Appius and Virginia* is by Webster," suggesting the style, vocabulary, and characterization of this play "make it highly probable that it is by Heywood," in *John Webster and the Elizabethan Drama* (London: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1916), 160-205.

8. See Sykes, *Sidelights on Elizabethan Drama* (Oxford UP, 1924), 108-39.

9. F. L. Lucas, *The Complete Works of John Webster*, vol 3 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1927), 136. The two-part history play *King Edward IV* was first printed in 1599.

10. Clark commented that Heywood's *The Rape of Lucrece* (1608) "is as like *Appius and Virginia* as one twin is to another" (255).

11. *Appius and Virginia* is now widely accepted to be a work of collaboration between Webster and Heywood.

12. Heywood's Prologues and Epilogues for revivals of Christopher Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta* (ca. 1589) were published in the 1633 quarto. Clark argued for "Heywood's radical revision of the play in or about 1632" (290).

13. In "Christopher Marlowe" (1919), TSE remarked: "it has always been said that the end, even the last two acts, are unworthy of the first three. If one takes the *Jew of Malta* not as a tragedy, or as a 'tragedy of blood,' but as a farce, the concluding act becomes intelligible" (2.101).

14. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* is based upon Walter Calverley's murder of two of his children in 1605. The title page of the 1608 first edition ascribes the play to "W. Shakspeare," but the work is now confidently attributed to Thomas Middleton. See R. V. Holdsworth, "Middleton's Authorship of *A Yorkshire Tragedy*," *Review of English Studies*, 45 (Feb 1994), 1-25. In 1919, TSE wrote in jest to Edgar Jepson: "[Damn] Heywood and domestic tragedy *except Yorkshire Tr*[*agedy*]" (*L1* 328).

15. In *The Age of Shakespeare*, Swinburne, who thought Shakespeare may have had a hand in *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, said the play was full "to overflowing of fierce animal power" (102).

16. See Clark, 301-28. *The Miseries of Enforced Marriage* (1607) by George Wilkins (d. 1618) was also based upon the Calverley murders.

17. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* sc. xviii.40-41

18. *A Yorkshire Tragedy* sc. iv.94-95. These lines are spoken just before the son is murdered.

19. Clark comments on "a certain manner of realism . . . characteristic of [Heywood]" (212).

20. II.iii.124-38. TSE quotes from his Mermaid Series edition of *Thomas Heywood*, ed. A. Wilson Verity (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903). In his introduction to this edition, J. Addington Symonds says that this speech, in which Wendoll declares his love for Frankford's wife, issues from "the spring of true poetic language" (xxi). Hazlitt also praised it in his Elizabethan lectures (73).

21. Clark explains Anne's rapid seduction by reference to the conventions of Elizabethan drama, adding, "it would have required a [George] Meredith to have made the fact of Mrs Frankford's fall convincing" (234).

22. Anne Frankford does not die merely from heartbreak; she deliberately starves herself.

23. V.vi.82; *read*: "whither I'm now bound"

24. In fact a lute, discovered by the servant who had informed Frankford of his wife's adultery.

25. Clark regretted the use of a double plot in *A Woman Killed with Kindness*, claiming "both have suffered" (230).

26. In the subplot, Sir Charles Mountford proposes to sacrifice the virginity of his sister Susan to Sir Francis Acton, in order to discharge his debts.

27. Clark comments, "In all English literature perhaps Dekker is Heywood's nearest parallel" (251).

28. TSE discusses the authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy* in "Cyril Tourneur" (4.197) and "Tourneur and 'The Revenger's Tragedy'" (4.221).

29. *The Roaring Girl* (1611) by Dekker and Middleton dramatizes the life of the pickpocket Moll Cutpurse. In "Thomas Middleton" (1927), TSE remarked: "Middleton's comedy deserves to be remembered chiefly by its real – perpetually real – and human figure of Moll the Roaring Girl" (3.128).

30. TSE confuses Middleton's *The Witch* with *The Witch of Edmonton* (1658) by William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford, in which an old woman sells her soul to the devil who appears in the shape of a dog. TSE had seen *The Witch of Edmonton* performed by the Phoenix Society at the Lyric Theatre in Apr 1920.

31†. In *TLS*: "uniquely"

32. *The English Traveller* II.i. In this bedroom scene, Young Geraldine and Old Wincott's wife renew their vows of love.

33. In "Le Morte Darthur" (1934), TSE remarks: "To a simpler and truer view of life than ours the moral law is a very real thing, as real and inexorable as natural law – indeed, a part of natural law: the early peoples did not foolishly require, as we do, that morality itself should be moral."

34. In Charles Dickens's novel *David Copperfield* (1850), Little Em'ly, Daniel Peggotty's orphan niece, is seduced but then abandoned by Steerforth.

35. In "Thomas Middleton" (1927),TSE said "the great tragedies" of the French dramatists Pierre Corneille and Jean-Baptiste Racine "are occupied with great and permanent moral conflicts" (3.125). In *Le Rouge et le Noir* (1830), the French novelist Stendhal depicts the protagonist, Julien Sorel, provoking the jealous love of his aristocratic employer's daughter, Mathilde de La Mole. In "Beyle and Balzac" (1919), TSE remarked that certain scenes between Julien and Mathilde, "are a terrible humiliation to read, in the understanding of human feelings and human illusions of feeling that they force upon the reader" (2.51).

36. In *The Age of Shakespeare*, Swinburne refers to "humble and homespun" Heywood (213). "O Nan! O Nan!" *A Woman Killed with Kindness* IV.vi.117. Frankford tearfully repeats his wife's pet name before scolding her as an adulteress in front of their children. King Lear's words are spoken over his dead daughter's body moments before his own death (*King Lear* V.iii.307).

37. Clark suggests that in *The Fair Maid of the West*, Part 2: "Heywood is deriving his standards from the slippery ethics of Fletcher and Massinger" (213).

38. In "Christopher Marlowe" (1919), TSE said that *The Jew of Malta* and *Volpone* belonged to "the farce of the old English humour, the terribly serious, even savage comic humour" (2.101).

39. *The Witch of Edmonton* IV.i.112-20

40. TSE has again confused Middleton's *The Witch* with Rowley, Dekker and Ford's *The Witch of Edmonton*.

41. *A Woman Killed with Kindness* IV.vi.19-20; lines spoken after Frankford has discovered his wife in bed with Wendoll.

The *Pensées* of Pascal[1]

It might seem that about Blaise Pascal, and about the two works on which his fame is founded, everything that there is to say had been said. The details of his life are as fully known as we can expect to know them; his mathematical and physical discoveries have been treated many times; his religious sentiment and his theological views have been discussed again and again; and his prose style has been analysed by French critics.[2†] But Pascal is one of those writers who will be and who must be studied afresh by men in every generation. It is not he who changes, but we who change. It is not our knowledge of him that increases, but our world that alters and our attitudes towards it. The history of human opinions of Pascal and of men of his stature is a part of the history of humanity. That indicates his permanent importance.

The facts[3†] of Pascal's life, so far as they are necessary for this brief introduction to the *Pensées*, are as follows. He was born at Clermont, in Auvergne, in 1623. His family were people of substance of the upper middle class. His father was a government official, who was able to leave, when he died, a sufficient patrimony to his one son and his two daughters. In 1631 the father moved to Paris, and a few years later took up another government post at Rouen. Wherever he lived, the elder Pascal seems to have mingled with some of the best society, and with men of eminence in science and the arts. Blaise was educated entirely by his father at home. He was exceedingly precocious, indeed excessively precocious, for his application to studies in childhood and adolescence impaired his health, and is held responsible for his death at thirty-nine.[4] Prodigious[5†] though not incredible stories are preserved, especially of his precocity in mathematics. His mind was active rather than accumulative; he showed from his earliest years that disposition to find things out for himself, which has characterized the infancy of Clerk Maxwell and other scientists.[6] Of his later discoveries in physics there is no need for mention here; it must only be remembered that he counts as one of the greatest physicists and mathematicians of all time; and that his discoveries were made during the years when most scientists are still apprentices.

The elder Pascal, Étienne, was a sincere Christian. About 1646 he fell in with some representatives of the religious revival within the Church which has become known as Jansenism – after Jansenius, Bishop of Ypres, whose theological work is taken as the origin of the movement.[7] This period is usually spoken of as the movement[8†] of Pascal's "first conversion." The word "conversion," however, is too forcible to be applied at this point to Blaise Pascal himself. The family had always been devout, and the younger Pascal, though absorbed in his scientific work, never seems to have been afflicted with infidelity. His attention was then directed, certainly, to religious and theological matters; but the term "conversion" can only be applied to his sisters – the elder, already Madame Périer, and particularly the younger, Jacqueline, who at that time conceived a vocation for the religious life.[9] Pascal himself was by no means disposed to renounce the world. After the death of the father in 1650 Jacqueline, a young woman of remarkable strength and beauty of character, wished to take her vows as a sister of Port-Royal, and for some time her wish remained unfulfilled owing to the opposition of her brother.[10] His objection was on the purely worldly ground that she wished to make over her patrimony to the Order; whereas while she lived with him, their combined resources made it possible for him to live more nearly on a scale of expense congenial to his tastes. He liked, in fact, not only to mix with the best society, but to keep a coach and horses – six horses is the number at one time attributed to his carriage. Though he had no legal power to prevent his sister from disposing of her property as she elected, the amiable Jacqueline shrank from doing so without her brother's willing approval. The Mother Superior, Mère Angélique – herself an eminent personage in the history of this religious movement – finally persuaded the young novice to enter the order without the satisfaction of bringing her patrimony with her; but Jacqueline remained so distressed by this situation that her brother finally relented.[11]

So far as is known, the worldly life enjoyed by Pascal during this period can hardly be qualified as "dissipation," and certainly not as "debauchery." Even gambling may have appealed to him chiefly as affording a study of mathematical probabilities. He appears to have led such a life as any cultivated intellectual man of good position and independent means might lead and consider himself a model of probity and virtue. Not even a love-affair is laid at his door, though he is said to have contemplated marriage. But Jansenism, as represented by the religious society of Port-Royal, was morally a Puritan movement within the Church, and its standards of conduct were at least as severe as those of any Puritanism in England or America.[12] The period of fashionable society, in Pascal's life, is however, of great importance in his development. It enlarged his knowledge of men and refined his tastes; he became a man of the world and never lost what he had learnt; and when he turned his thoughts wholly towards religion, his worldly knowledge was a part of his composition which is essential to the value of his work.

Pascal's interest in society did not distract him from scientific research; nor did this period occupy much space in what is a very short and crowded life. Partly his natural dissatisfaction with such a life, once he had learned all it had to teach him, partly the influence of his saintly sister Jacqueline, partly increasing suffering as his health declined, directed him more and more out of the world and to thoughts of eternity. And in 1654 occurs what is called his "second conversion," but which might be called his conversion simply.

He made a note of his mystical experience, which he kept always about him, and which was found, after his death, sewn into the coat which he was wearing. The experience occurred on 23rd November, 1654, and there is no reason to doubt its genuineness unless we choose to deny all mystical experience.[13] Now, Pascal was not a mystic, and his works are not to be classified amongst mystical writings; but what can only be called mystical experience happens to many men who do not become mystics. The work which he undertook soon after, the *Lettres écrites à un provincial*, is a masterpiece of religious controversy at the opposite pole from mysticism.[14] We know quite well that he was at the time when he received his illumination from God in extremely poor health; but it is a commonplace that some forms of illness are extremely favourable, not only to religious illumination, but to artistic and literary composition. A piece of writing meditated, apparently without progress, for months or years, may suddenly take shape and word; and in this state long passages may be produced which require little or no retouch. I have no good word to say for the cultivation of automatic writing as the model of literary composition; I doubt whether these moments *can* be cultivated by the writer; but he to whom this happens assuredly has the sensation of being a vehicle rather than a maker.[15] No masterpiece can be produced whole by such means; but neither does even the higher form of religious inspiration suffice for the religious life; even the most exalted mystic must return to the world, and use his reason to employ the results of his experience in daily life. You may call it communion with the Divine, or you may call it a temporary crystallization of the mind. Until science can teach us to reproduce such phenomena at will, science cannot claim to have explained them; and they can be judged only by their fruits.

From that time until his death, Pascal was closely associated with the society of Port-Royal which his sister Jacqueline, who predeceased him, had joined as a *religieuse*;[16] the society was then fighting for its life against the Jesuits. Five propositions, judged by a committee of cardinals and theologians at Rome to be heretical, were found to be put forward in the work of Jansenius; and the society of Port-Royal, the representative of Jansenism among devotional communities, suffered a blow from which it never revived. It is not the place here to review the bitter controversy and conflict; the best account, from the point of view of a critic of genius who took no side, who was neither Jansenist nor Jesuit, Christian nor infidel, is that in the great book of Sainte-Beuve, *Port-Royal*.[17] And in this book the parts devoted to Pascal himself are among the most brilliant pages of criticism that Sainte-Beuve ever wrote. It is sufficient to notice that the next occupation of Pascal, after his conversion, was to write these eighteen *Letters*, which as prose are of capital importance in the foundation of French classical style, and which as polemic are surpassed by none, not by Demosthenes, or Cicero, or Swift. They have the limitation of all polemic and forensic: they persuade, they seduce, they are unfair. But it is also unfair to assert that, in these *Letters to a Provincial*, Pascal was attacking the Society of Jesus in itself. He was attacking rather a particular school of casuistry which relaxed the requirements of the Confessional; a school which certainly flourished amongst the Society of Jesus at that time, and of which the Spaniards Escobar and Molina are the most eminent authorities.[18] He undoubtedly abused the art of quotation, as a polemical writer can hardly help but do; but there were abuses for him to abuse; and he did the job thoroughly. His *Letters* must not be called theology. Academic theology was not a department in which Pascal was versed; when necessary, the fathers of Port-Royal came to his aid. The *Letters* are the work of one of the finest mathematical minds of any time, and of a man of the world who addressed, not theologians, but the world in general – all of the cultivated and many of the less cultivated of the French laity; and with this public they made an astonishing success.

During this time Pascal never wholly abandoned his scientific interests. Though in his religious writings he composed slowly and painfully, and revised often, in matters of mathematics his mind seemed to move with consummate natural ease and grace. Discoveries and inventions sprang from his brain without effort; among the minor devices of this later period, the first omnibus service in Paris is said to owe its origin to his inventiveness.[19] But rapidly failing health, and absorption in the great work he had in mind, left him little time and energy during the last two years of his life.

The plan of what we call the *Pensées* formed itself about 1660.[20] The completed book was to have been a carefully constructed defence of Christianity, a true Apology and a kind of Grammar of Assent, setting forth the reasons which will convince the intellect.[21] As I have indicated before, Pascal was not a theologian, and on dogmatic theology had recourse to his spiritual advisers. Nor was he indeed a systematic philosopher. He was a man with an immense genius for science, and at the same time a natural psychologist and moralist. As he was a great literary artist, his book would have been also his own spiritual autobiography; his style, free from all diminishing idiosyncrasies, was yet very personal. Above all, he was a man of strong passions; and his intellectual passion for truth was reinforced by his passionate dissatisfaction with human life unless a spiritual explanation could be found.

We must regard the *Pensées* as merely the first notes for a work which he left far from completion; we have, in Sainte-Beuve's words, a tower of which the stones have been laid on each other, but not cemented, and the structure unfinished. In early years his memory had been amazingly retentive of anything that he wished to remember; and had it not been impaired by increasing illness and pain, he probably would not have been obliged to set down these notes at all. But taking the book as it is left to us, we still find that it occupies a unique place in the history of French literature and in the history of religious meditation.

To understand the method which Pascal employs, the reader must be prepared to follow the process of the mind of the intelligent believer. The Christian thinker – and I mean the man who is trying consciously and conscientiously to explain to himself the sequence which culminated in faith, rather than the public apologist – proceeds by rejection and elimination. He finds the world to be so and so; he finds its character inexplicable by any non-religious theory; among religions he finds Christianity, and Catholic Christianity, to account most satisfactorily for the world and especially for the moral world within; and thus, by what Newman calls "powerful and concurrent" reasons, he finds himself inexorably committed to the dogma of the Incarnation.[22] To the unbeliever, this method seems disingenuous and perverse; for the unbeliever is, as a rule, not so greatly troubled to explain the world to himself, nor so greatly distressed by its disorder; nor is he generally concerned (in modern terms) to "preserve values."[23] He does not consider that if certain emotional states, certain developments[24†] of character, and what in the highest sense can be called "saintliness" are inherently and by inspection known to be good, then the satisfactory explanation of the world must be an explanation which will admit the "reality" of these values. Nor does he consider such reasoning admissible; he would, so to speak, trim his values according to his cloth, because to him such values are of no great value. The unbeliever starts from the other end, and as likely as not with the question: Is a case of human parthenogenesis credible? and this he would call going straight to the heart of the matter.[25] Now Pascal's method is, on the whole, the method natural and right for the Christian; and the opposite method is that taken by Voltaire. It is worthwhile to remember that Voltaire, in his attempt to refute Pascal, has given once and for all the type of such refutation; and that later opponents of Pascal's Apology for the Christian Faith have contributed little beyond psychological irrelevancies. For Voltaire has presented, better than anyone since, what is the unbelieving point of view; and in the end we must all choose for ourselves between one point of view and another.[26]

I have said above that Pascal's method is "on the whole" that of the typical Christian apologist; and this reservation was directed at Pascal's belief in miracles, which plays a larger part in his construction than it would in that, at least, of the modern liberal Catholic. It would seem fantastic to accept Christianity because we first believe the Gospel miracles to be true, and it would seem impious to accept it primarily because we believe more recent miracles to be true; we accept the miracles, or some miracles, to be true because we believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ: we found our belief in the miracles on the Gospel, not our belief in the Gospel on the miracles. But it must be remembered that Pascal had been deeply impressed by a contemporary miracle, known as the miracle of the Holy Thorn: a thorn reputed to have been preserved from the Crown of Our Lord was pressed upon an ulcer which quickly healed. Sainte-Beuve, who as a medical man felt himself on solid ground, discusses fully the possible explanation of this apparent miracle. It is true that the miracle happened at Port-Royal, and that it arrived opportunely to revive the depressed spirits of the community in its political afflictions; and it is likely that Pascal was the more inclined to believe a miracle which was performed upon his beloved sister. In any case, it probably led him to assign a place to miracles, in his study of faith, which is not quite that which we should give to them ourselves.[27]

Now the great adversary against whom Pascal set himself, from the time of his first conversations with M. de Saci at Port-Royal, was Montaigne.[28] One cannot destroy Pascal, certainly; but of all authors Montaigne is one of the least destructible. You could as well dissipate a fog by flinging hand-grenades into it. For Montaigne is a fog, a gas, a fluid, insidious element. He does not reason, he insinuates, charms, and influences; or if he reasons, you must be prepared for his having some other design upon you than to convince you by his argument. It is hardly too much to say that Montaigne is the most essential author to know, if we would understand the course of French thought during the last three hundred years. In every way, the influence of Montaigne was repugnant to the men of Port-Royal. Pascal studied him with the intention of demolishing him. Yet, in the *Pensées*, at the very end of his life, we find passage after passage, and the slighter they are the more significant, almost "lifted" out of Montaigne, down to a figure of speech or a word. The parallels[29]* are most often with the long essay of Montaigne called *Apologie de Raymond Sébond* an astonishing piece of writing upon which Shakespeare also probably drew in *Hamlet*.[30] Indeed, by the time a man knew Montaigne well enough to attack him, he would already be thoroughly infected by him.[31]

It would, however, be grossly unfair to Pascal, to Montaigne, and indeed to French literature, to leave the matter at that. It is no diminution of Pascal, but only an aggrandizement of Montaigne. Had Montaigne been an ordinary life-sized sceptic, a small man like Anatole France, or even a greater man like Renan, or even like the greatest sceptic of all, Voltaire, this "influence" would be to the discredit of Pascal; but if Montaigne had been no more than Voltaire, he could not have affected Pascal at all.[32] The picture of Montaigne which offers itself first to our eyes, that of the original and independent solitary "personality," absorbed in amused analysis of himself, is deceptive. Montaigne's is no *limited* Pyrrhonism, like that of Voltaire, Renan, or France. He exists, so to speak, on a plan of numerous concentric circles, the most apparent of which is the small inmost circle, a personal puckish scepticism which can be easily aped if not imitated. But what makes Montaigne a very great figure is that he succeeded, God knows how – for Montaigne very likely did not know that he had done it – it is not the sort of thing that men *can* observe about themselves, for it is essentially bigger than the individual's consciousness – he succeeded in giving expression to the scepticism of *every* human being. For every man who thinks and lives by thought must have his own scepticism, that which stops at the question, that which ends in denial, or that which leads to faith and which is somehow integrated into the faith which transcends it. And Pascal, as the type of one kind of religious believer, which is highly passionate and ardent, but passionate only through a powerful and regulated intellect, is in the first sections of his unfinished Apology for Christianity facing unflinchingly the demon of doubt which is inseparable from the spirit of belief.

There is accordingly something quite different from an influence which would prove Pascal's weakness; there is a real affinity between his doubt and that of Montaigne; and through the common kinship with Montaigne Pascal is related to the noble and distinguished line of French moralists, from La Rochefoucauld down. In the honesty with which they face the *données*[33] of the actual world this French tradition has a unique quality in European literature, and in the seventeenth century Hobbes is crude[34†] in comparison.

Pascal is a man of the world among ascetics, and an ascetic among men of the world; he had the knowledge of worldliness and the passion of asceticism, and in him the two are fused into an individual whole. The majority of mankind is lazy-minded, incurious, absorbed in vanities, and tepid in emotion, and is therefore incapable of either much doubt or much faith; and when the ordinary man calls himself a sceptic or an unbeliever, that is ordinarily a simple pose, cloaking a disinclination to think anything out to a conclusion. Pascal's disillusioned analysis of human bondage is sometimes interpreted to mean that Pascal was really and finally an unbeliever, who, in his despair, was incapable of enduring reality and enjoying the heroic satisfaction of the free man's worship of nothing. His despair, his disillusion, are, however, no illustration of personal weakness; they are perfectly objective, because they are essential moments in the progress of the intellectual soul; and for the type of Pascal they are the analogue of the drought, the dark night, which is an essential stage in the progress of the Christian mystic.[35] A similar despair, when it is arrived at by a diseased character or an impure soul, may issue in the most disastrous consequences though with the most superb manifestations; and thus we get *Gulliver's Travels*; but in Pascal we find no such distortion; his despair is in itself more terrible than Swift's because our heart tells us that it corresponds exactly to the facts and cannot be dismissed as mental disease; but it was also a despair which was a necessary prelude to, and element in, the joy of faith.[36]

I do not wish to enter any further than necessary upon the question of the heterodoxy of Jansenism; and it is no concern of this essay whether the Five Propositions condemned at Rome were really maintained by Jansenius in his book *Augustinus*, or whether we should deplore or approve the consequent decay (indeed with some persecution) of Port-Royal.[37] It is impossible to discuss the matter without becoming involved as a controversialist either for or against Rome. But in a man of the type of Pascal – and the type always exists – there is, I think, an ingredient of what may be called Jansenism of temperament, without identifying it with the Jansenism of Jansenius and of other devout and sincere, but not immensely gifted doctors.[38*] It is accordingly needful to state in brief what the dangerous doctrine of Jansenius was, without advancing too far into theological refinements. It is recognized in Christian theology – and indeed on a lower plane it is recognized by all men in affairs of daily life – that freewill or the natural effort and ability of the individual man, and also supernatural *grace*, a gift accorded we know not quite how, are both required, in co-operation, for salvation. Though numerous theologians have set their wits at the problem, it ends in a mystery which we can perceive but not finally decipher. At least, it is obvious that, like any doctrine, a slight excess or deviation to one side or the other will precipitate a heresy. The Pelagians, who were refuted by St. Augustine, emphasised the efficacy of human effort and belittled the importance of supernatural grace.[39] The Calvinists emphasized the degradation of man through Original Sin, and considered mankind so corrupt that the will was of no avail; and thus fell into the doctrine of predestination.[40] It was upon the doctrine of grace according to St. Augustine that the Jansenists relied; and the *Augustinus* of Jansenius was presented as a sound exposition of the Augustinian views.

Heresies[41†] are never antiquated, because they forever assume new forms. For instance, the insistence upon good works and "service" which is preached from many quarters, or the simple faith that anyone who lives a good and useful life need have no "morbid" anxieties about salvation, is a form of Pelagianism. On the other hand, one sometimes hears enounced the view that it will make no real difference if all the traditional religious sanctions for moral behaviour break down, because those who are born and bred to be nice people will always prefer to behave nicely, and those who are not will behave otherwise in any case: and this is surely a form of predestination – for the hazard of being born a nice person or not is as uncertain as the gift of grace.

It is likely that Pascal was attracted as much by the fruits of Jansenism in the life of Port-Royal as by the doctrine itself. This devout, ascetic, thoroughgoing society, striving heroically in the midst of a relaxed and easy-going Christianity, was formed to attract a nature so concentrated, so passionate, and so thoroughgoing as Pascal's. But the insistence upon the degraded and helpless state of man, in Jansenism, is something also to which we must be grateful, for to it we owe the magnificent analysis of human motives and occupations which was to have constituted the early part of his book. And apart from the Jansenism which is the work of a not very eminent bishop who wrote a Latin treatise which is now unread,[42] there is also, so to speak, a Jansenism of the individual biography. A moment of Jansenism may naturally take place, and take place rightly, in the individual; particularly in the life of a man of great and intense intellectual powers, who cannot avoid seeing through human beings and observing the vanity of their thoughts and of their avocations, their dishonesty and self-deceptions, the insincerity of their emotions, their cowardice, the pettiness of their real ambitions.[43]* Actually, considering that Pascal died at the age of thirty-nine, one must be amazed at the balance and justice of his observations; much greater maturity is required for these qualities, than for any mathematical or scientific greatness. How easily his brooding on *the misery of man without God* might have encouraged in him the sin of spiritual pride, the *concupiscence de l'esprit*, and how fast a hold he has of humility![44]

And although Pascal brings to his work the same powers which he exerted in science, it is not as a scientist that he presents himself. He does not seem to say to the reader; I am one of the most distinguished scientists of the day; I understand many matters which will always be mysteries to you, and through science I have come to the Faith; you therefore who are not initiated into science ought to have faith if I have it. He is fully aware of the difference of subject-matter; and his famous distinction between the *esprit de géométrie* and the *esprit de finesse* is one to ponder over.[45]†

> En l'un, les principes sont palpables, mais éloignés de l'usage commun; de sorte qu'on a peine à tourner la tête de ce côté-là, manqué d'habitude: mais pour peu qu'on l'y tourne, on voit les principes à plein; et il faudrait avoir tout à fait l'esprit faux pour mal raisonner sur des principes si gros qu'il est presque impossible qu'ils échappent.
>
> Mais dans l'esprit de finesse, les principes son dans l'usage commun et devant les yeux de tout le monde. On n'a que faire de tourner la tête, ni

> de se faire violence; il n'est question que d'avoir bonne vue, mais il faut l'avoir bonne; car les principes sont si déliés et en si grand nombre, qu'il est presque impossible qu'il n'en échappe. Or, l'omission d'un principe mène à l'erreur; ainsi, il faut avoir la vue bien nette pour tous les principes, et ensuit l'esprit juste pour ne pas raisonner faussement sur des principes connus.[46]

It is the just combination of the scientist, the *honnête homme*, and the religious nature with a passionate craving for God, that makes Pascal unique.[47] He succeeds where Descartes fails; for in Descartes the element of *esprit de géométrie* is excessive.[48*] And in a few phrases about Descartes, in the present book, Pascal laid his finger on the place of weakness.[49†]

> Je ne puis pardonner à Descartes; il aurait bien voulu, dans toute sa philosophie, se pouvoir passer de Dieu; mais il n'a pu s'empêcher de lui faire donner une chiquenaude, pour mettre le monde en mouvement; après cela, il n'a plus que faire de Dieu.[50] [Massis 53]

He who reads this book will observe at once its fragmentary nature; but only after some study will perceive that the fragmentariness lies in the expression more than in the thought. The "thoughts" cannot he detached from each other and quoted as if each were complete in itself. *Le cœur a ses raisons, que la raison ne connaît point*:[51] how often one has heard that quoted, and quoted often to the wrong purpose![52*] For this is by no means an exaltation of the "heart" over the "head," a defence of unreason. The heart, in Pascal's terminology, is itself truly rational if it is truly the heart. For him, in theological matters, which seemed to him much larger, more difficult, and more important than scientific matters, the whole personality is involved.

We cannot quite understand any of the parts, fragmentary as they are, without some understanding of the whole. Capital, for instance, is his analysis of the three orders: the order of nature, the order of mind, and the order of charity.[53] These three are *discontinuous*; the higher is not implicit in the lower as in an evolutionary doctrine it would be.[54*] In this distinction Pascal offers much about which the modern world would do well to think. And indeed, because of his unique combination and balance of qualities, I know of no religious writer more pertinent to our time. The great mystics like St. John of the Cross, are primarily for readers with a special determination of purpose; the devotional writers, such as St. François de Sales, are primarily for those who already feel consciously desirous of the love of God; the great theologians are for those interested in theology.[55] But I can think of no Christian writer, not Newman even, more to be commended than Pascal to those who doubt, but who have the mind to conceive, and the sensibility to feel, the disorder, the futility, the meaninglessness, the mystery of life and suffering, and who can only find peace through satisfaction of the whole being.

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; not in *SE* (1932); originally the Introduction to *Pascal's Pensées*, trans. W. F. Trotter (London: J. M. Dent; New York: E. P. Dutton, 1931); Introduction, vii-xix; published on 19 Sept 1931; hereafter *PP*; rpt. in *EAM* (1936). TSE wrote to Ernest Rhys, editor of J. M. Dent and Sons, on 16 Oct 1930 that his invitation was "a great temptation": "The chief difficulty for me is that of time. I should have to go through the *Pensées* very carefully, and also, again, the *Provinciales*; refresh myself on *Port Royal*, and otherwise acquire knowledge.... If you do not need the introduction for six or eight months, I should rather like to undertake it" (*L5* 353). TSE drafted the introduction in Apr 1931 and on 4 May explained in a letter to Rhys: "I am very doubtful about it as this is the first time that I have attempted an introduction to a popular edition of anything; so I do not know whether it is too elementary or not elementary enough" (*L5* 561). TS (carbon), titled "Pascal in the Pensées" (17pp.); Houghton: Am 1691 (55).

2†. in *PP*: "by French critics down to the finest particular."

3†. in *EAM*: "The few facts"

4. Pascal was born on 19 June 1623 in Clermont-Ferrand, Auvergne, and died in Paris on 19 Aug 1662.

5†. In *PP* and *EAM*: "Prodigious,"

6. James Clerk Maxwell (1831-79), Scottish physicist, author of *A Treatise on Electricity and Magnetism* (1873), in which he formulated electromagnetic theory.

7. Étienne Pascal (1588-1651), lawyer and tax official, was converted by two Jansenists in 1646 who had treated his injured leg. Dutch theologian Corneille Janssens (1585-1638), known as Cornelius Jansen, Bishop of Ypres (in present-day Belgium), was an exponent of doctrines which exalted the act of faith above reason as a guide to theological and metaphysical truth. Jansenism flourished in seventeenth-century France, largely due to the works published by the writers associated with the abbey of Port-Royal-des-Champs southwest of Paris.

8†. In *PP*: "moment"

9. Gilberte Pascal Périer (1620-87), author of a memoir of her brother *La Vie de Monsieur Pascal* (1684), married Florin Périer in 1641.

10. Jacqueline Pascal (1625-61) entered Port-Royal following her father's death in 1651 (not 1650). Étienne had opposed her desire to become a nun.

11. Jacqueline-Marie-Angélique Arnauld or Arnault, called La Mère Angélique (1591-1661), abbess of Port-Royal and sister of the prominent Jansenist theologian Antoine Arnauld.

12. On 13 Mar 1946, TSE responded to Ernst Robert Curtius's criticism of a gloomy and austere element in *Four Quartets*: "I also admit to a natural tendency to Jansenism which no

doubt is partly individual temperament and partly the reflex of a strong element of Calvinism on both sides of my family in the seventeenth century, but it does seem to me that I have kept on moving, although perhaps at a very slow pace."

13. On the night of 23 Nov 1654, Pascal had a mystical revelation while reading New Testament accounts of Christ's Passion and resolved to commit himself to God. He recorded the experience in a note to himself (now known as the Memorial), which was sewn into his coat and discovered by a servant after his death.

14. Full title: *Les Provinciales ou les Lettres écrites par Louis de Montalte à un provincial de ses amis* (1656-57) [translated as *The Provincial Letters*], written in defense of Antoine Arnauld against attacks by Jesuits.

15. Automatic writing is a form of composition by free association, apparently produced by a spiritual or psychic agency, practised at this time by W. B. Yeats and the French surrealists.

16. *religieuse*: a nun

17. Sainte-Beuve examines the bitter controversies between Jansenists and Jesuits in *Port-Royal* (1840-59). TSE possessed a seven-volume edition of this historical study, which he had recently described in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July as "a masterpiece" (4.308).

18. Pascal's *Letters* satirize the casuistry of the Jesuit theologian Antonio Escobar y Mendoza (1589-1669).

19. Pascal started the first public bus service (horse-drawn vehicles with regular routes and schedule charging a small fare) in Paris in 1662.

20. Trotter states that the first edition appeared in 1670: "though the original material was so much altered by its editors as to render the work valueless. . . . Not until 1844 (Faugère), was any real attempt made to present a faithful text" (xix).

21. TSE alludes to Newman's *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864) and to *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (1870) of which TSE owned a 1924 edition.

22. Newman describes the "illative sense" combining intellect and imagination as "creating a certitude of its truth by arguments too various for direct enumeration, too personal and deep for words, too powerful and concurrent for refutation." *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1885) 490-91.

23. On 1 Apr 1918, TSE complained to Eleanor Hinkley, "in England the sentimental heroic phase is gone, but there are very few people who have been able quite to preserve values and stick to their own business" (*L1* 258).

24†. In *EAM*: "development"

25. Parthenogenesis (OED): "asexual reproduction, as by fission or budding"

26. Voltaire attacked Pascal in his *Lettres philosophiques* (1734) for seeking to reduce religion to metaphysics. He argued that Pascal was not a true philosopher, that he had neither an enlightened mind nor a humanitarian heart, and that his views encouraged fanaticism. On 24 Aug 1936, TSE responded to Algar Thorold's inquiry about Voltaire's critique of Pascal: "I am sorry to say that I cannot give any reference to Voltaire. The essay is some years old, and I suppose that Voltaire turned up in some of the reading which I was doing at the moment."

27. In 1657, Pascal's niece, Marguerite Périer, was cured of a fistula in the eye after contact with a relic of the Holy Thorn (reputedly part of the Crown of Thorns worn by Christ at the Passion) kept at Port-Royal. It is believed that Pascal started his treatise on miracles shortly afterward (Section XIII of the Everyman edition of *Pascal's Pensées*). In his letter to Thorold of

24 Aug 1936, TSE explains: "Now about Pascal and miracles. I am not sure that what I said arising from this point is perfectly orthodox, and I think that perhaps I should have stated it differently. But in any case, I am not accustomed to think of the Incarnation as a miracle in the ordinary sense. What I mean by a miracle is an event which is conceivably capable of repetition, and of being therefore different in kind from the Incarnation, which one might describe as supramiraculous, and having a significance as a unique historical event which sets it quite apart from what I call miraculous. The Incarnation not only happens to be a unique event, but by its nature can only be a unique event."

28. Louis-Isaac Lemaistre de Saci (1613-84), spiritual director of Port-Royal and translator of the Bible. Pascal attacks Montaigne's skepticism (or Pyrrhonism) in his *Entretien avec M. de Saci* [Conversation with Mr. de Saci] (posthumously published in French in 1874).

29*. TSE's note: "Cf. the use of the simile of the *couvreur*. For comparing parallel passages, the edition of the *Pensées* by Henri Massis (*À la cité des livres*) is better than the two-volume edition of Jacques Chevalier (Gabalda). It seems just possible that in the latter edition, and also in his biographical study (*Pascal*; by Jacques Chevalier, English translation, published by Sheed & Ward), M. Chevalier is a little over-zealous to demonstrate the perfect orthodoxy of Pascal." TSE owned Chevalier's edition of Pascal and anonymously briefly noted the Massis edition in the *Criterion* for July 1929 (766).

30. TSE draws on J. M. Robertson's argument in *Montaigne and Shakespeare* (1897). He owned a two-volume Temple Classics edition of *The Essayes of Michael Lord of Montaigne* (1915) containing the essay "Apologie de Raymond Sébond" [Apology for Raymond Sebond] (1580).

31. In Pensée 64, Pascal remarks: "It is not in Montaigne, but in myself, that I find all that I see in him" (*PP* 15).

32. In "Religion without Humanism" (1930), TSE remarks: "The attitude of Voltaire has value, because of its place in time; the attitude of Renan has value, in its historical perspective; Anatole France I can only consider as a man who came at the most unfortunate date for his own reputation – too late to be a great sceptic, and too soon to be a great sceptic" (4.36).

33. *données*: data

34†. In *PP*: "crude and uncivilised"; in "John Bramhall" (1927), TSE attacks Hobbes as "one of those extraordinary little upstarts whom the chaotic motions of the Renaissance tossed into an eminence which they hardly deserved and have never lost" (3.144).

35. TSE encountered the conception of the Darkness of God as an ascetic "dark night" of the soul in Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism* (1911), which he studied at Harvard.

36. In "Cyril Tourneur" (1930), TSE describes *Gulliver's Travels* as a "work of cynicism and loathing" (4.203).

37. Pope Innocent X's condemnation of Jansenism for heresy in 1653 rested on the incriminating Five Propositions that opponents claimed were articulated in Jansen's *Augustinus* (1640).

38*. TSE's note: "The great man of Port-Royal was of course Saint-Cyran, but anyone who is interested will certainly consult, first of all, the book of Sainte-Beuve mentioned."

The French theologian Jean Duvergier de Hauranne (1581-1643), known as the abbé de Saint-Cyran, from the abbey where he was titular head, was spiritual director at Port-Royal. Sainte-Beuve examines Saint-Cyran's role in establishing Jansenism in *Port-Royal*.

39. Pelagianism is the belief that original sin did not taint human nature, therefore rejecting the Augustinian concept of grace. St. Augustine's arguments were used to condemn the Pelagians

as heretics at the Council of Orange in 529. Jansen's *Augustinus* attacked Pelagianism by arguing that man's fallen state was in need of divine grace for salvation.

40. On 24 Jan 1940, TSE wrote to the editor of *The New English Weekly*: "I hold no predestination theory of damnation."

41†. In *PP*: "Such heresies"

42. i.e., *Augustinus*

43*. TSE's note: "Cette négligence en une affaire où il s'agit d'eux-mêmes, de leur éternité, de leur tout, m'irrite plus qu'elle ne m'attendrit; elle m'étonne et m'épouvante, c'est un monstre pour moi. Je ne dis pas ceci par le zèle pieux d'une dévotion spirituelle. J'entends au contraire qu'on doit avoir ce sentiment par un principe d'intérêt humain et par un intérêt d'amour-propre: il ne faut pour cela que voir ce que voient les personnes les moins éclairées. *Pensées*: ed. Massis, p. 29."

Text from *Pensées de Blaise Pascal*, ed. Henri Massis (Paris: À la cité des livres, 1929); *trans*: "This carelessness in a matter which concerns themselves, their eternity, their all, moves me more to anger than pity; it astonishes and shocks me; it is to me monstrous. I do not say this out of the pious zeal of a spiritual devotion. I expect, on the contrary, that we ought to have this feeling from principles of human interest and self-love; for this we need only see what the least enlightened persons see" (*PP* 54).

44. "The Misery of Man without God" is the title of Section II of the Everyman edition (*PP* 14-51).

45†. The following paragraphs in French do not appear in *PP*. Pascal's *Pensées* includes a treatise on the "Différences de l'esprit géométrique et de l'esprit de finesse"; "The difference between the mathematical and the intuitive mind" (*PP* 1).

46. *Pensées de Blaise Pascal*, ed. Massis, (359); *trans*: "In the one the principles are palpable, but removed from ordinary use; so that for want of habit it is difficult to turn one's mind in that direction: but if one turns it thither ever so little, one sees the principles fully, and one must have a quite inaccurate mind who reasons wrongly from principles so plain that it is almost impossible that they should escape notice.

But in the intuitive mind the principles are found in common use, and are before the eyes of everybody. One has only to look, and no effort is necessary; it is only a question of good eyesight, but it must be good, for the principles are so subtle and so numerous, that it is almost impossible but that some escape notice. Now the omission of one principle leads to error; thus one must have very clear sight to see all the principles, and in the next place an accurate mind not to draw false deductions from known principles" (*PP* 1).

47. *honnête homme*: well-bred gentleman

48*. TSE's note: "For a brilliant criticism of the errors of Descartes from a theological point of view the reader is referred to *Three Reformers* by Jacques Maritain (translation published by Sheed & Ward)." TSE reviewed Maritain's critique of Luther, Descartes, and Rousseau in the *TLS* of 8 Nov 1928. (3.504)

49†. The following paragraph in French does not appear in *PP*.

50. *Trans*: "I cannot forgive Descartes. In all his philosophy he would have been quite willing to dispense with God. But he had to make Him give a fillip to set the world in motion; beyond this, he has no further need of God" (trans. W. F. Potter, *PP* 23).

51. *Les Pensées de Blaise Pascal*, ed. Massis, 44. *Trans*: "The heart has its reasons, which reason does not know" (*PP* 78).

52*. TSE's note (not in *PP*): "And those who have quoted *C'est là ma place au soleil* have forgotten to add *Voilà le commencement et l'image de l'usurpation de toute la terre*" (Massis, 118); *trans*: "'that is my place in the sun.' Here is the beginning and the image of the usurpation of all the earth" (*PP* 85).

53. Pascal's *Pensées* advances the theory of three discontinuous hierarchical orders: the natural orders of body ("corps") and mind ("esprit") and an infinitely higher supernatural order of charity ("charité").

54*. TSE's note: "An important modern theory of discontinuity, suggested partly by Pascal, is sketched in the collected fragments of *Speculations* by T. E. Hulme (Kegan Paul)." Hulme remarks in *Speculations*: "Everything that I shall say later in these notes is to be regarded merely as a prolegomena to the reading of Pascal" (56-57). For TSE's comments on Hulme's "theory of discontinuity," see "The Demon of the Absolute" (1929) (3.587).

55. De Sales was the author of *Traicté de l'amour de Dieu* (1616) [*Treatise on the Love of God*].

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 11 (Oct 1931) 65-72

Being willing to improve my scant knowledge of the theory of politics, I welcomed the appearance lately of two small books, both of which, to judge from their titles, were elementary enough for my needs. One was *An Introduction to Politics*, by Mr. Harold J. Laski (Unwin: 2s. 6d.), and the other *Ich Dien: The Tory Path*, by Lord Lymington (Constable: 4s. 6d.). Mr. Laski is more than well known as an exponent of moderate Socialism; Lord Lymington, as the title of his essay indicates, is a Conservative M.P.[1] Surely, by combining and contrasting such points of view, one could arrive at some conclusion. The conclusions were indeed interesting to myself, though hardly what I expected.

Professor Laski begins with comfortable words. "The state, so to say," he says, "is the crowning-point of the modern social edifice" [15]; and this is reassuring; the phrase "social edifice" has a pleasant sound to the timid-hearted. "Its subjects desire, for instance, security for their persons and property" [19]. Indeed we do. It is true that we may be a little disconcerted, a page or two further on, by a sentence in Mr. Laski's best style:

> Yet it may be taken as a general rule that the character of any particular state will be, broadly speaking, a function of the economic system which obtains in the society it controls. [21]

This was a little puzzling. For one was encouraged by the author's prefatory statement that he intended to set out the *basic problems* of politics: yet if the "character of any particular state" is the "function" of an economic system, then we may suppose that the character of politics is a function of economics: and therefore it seems that there are basic problems more basic than the political ones. This is rather disheartening to the beginner. Is it possible that I ought to have consulted some primer on the "basic problems" of economics – the basic problems of which Oustric, Madame Hanau, Teapot Dome and Marconi Shares were particular manifestations – before reading Mr. Laski?[2] And so far as Mr. Laski's politics is concerned, its function seems to be merely to be a function of that economic variable, for he says:

> Not a little of the malaise of modern civilisation is due to the fact that the institutions of the state have not kept pace with other changes, particularly economic, in the society it attempts to control. [55]

So if the business of "institutions" of the state is merely to keep pace with economic changes, not to control them, the detached enquirer must begin to lose heart about politics, and to reflect that a more important subject of study might be these economic changes, and how to control *them*.

Finally, however, I began to suspect that Mr. Laski's "introduction to politics" was perhaps only an introduction to one kind of politics; and that kind simply a development of the old-fashioned American conception of Democracy. This view is assumed, not defended. For he says straight out:

> . . . no state will realise the end for which it exists unless it is a democracy based upon universal suffrage in which there are not only freedom of speech and association, but also a recognition that neither race nor creed, birth nor property, shall be a barrier against the exercise of civic rights. [38]

Such a sentence merely provokes a fresh explosion of questions. For what end *does* the state exist? And why should *not* race, creed, birth and property, any one or more of them, be a desirable barrier? And what are *civic rights*? It is just these questions which we want answered in an "introduction to politics"; and we must admit that there is more than one possible answer to all of them. And some such assumption is apt to turn up just when needed, throughout Mr. Laski's essay. "Historical research," he says, "has shattered all systems, which claim to operate under theological sanctions" [28]: not practice, you observe, but "historical research" – this bombshell against theocracy was flung from a window of the London School of Economics. "The power of the state is justified to the degree that it secures, at the least possible sacrifice, the maximum satisfaction of human wants" [33]. But does *wants* here mean *needs*? Or does it include all the fluctuating capricious or undesirable desires of men? Later, Mr. Laski speaks of a man's right to attain "significance" for himself, of "fulfilment of personality" [37], of "self-realization" [39]; but the problems concealed by these words, and not the problems discussed in the pamphlet, are the real "basic problems" of politics. He tells us unctuously that "the right to education is therefore fundamental to citizenship" [37]. But is citizenship itself fundamental? – and even so, what is education? Unless we mean by education that very modest amount of knowledge which can be imparted by mass-instruction, we have no more a right to education than we have to happiness, genius or beauty. So far as we have "rights," every man or woman has the right to be educated to *some* useful function in the community; but what is meant by education must differ greatly in kind. But Mr. Laski speaks as if education varied only in degree, and as if it was all directed towards one end: voting for the best candidate. He says "the uneducated man among the complexities of modern civilization is like a blind man who cannot relate cause and effect" [37]. I do not quite understand Mr. Laski's theory of the causal relation between blindness and an inability to appreciate causality, but that is a small matter. I only hope that Mr. Laski's education has enabled him to understand the complexities of modern civilization. My own education was very defective; but I have known much better educated men than I to be completely baffled by the complexities of modern civilization. And here again a question seems to be begged. Might it not be well to consider these complexities and to try to simplify some of them, so that simple people like myself should not be crushed by the burden of the right to so much education? For otherwise the complexities may become more complex still, and then we shall need more and more education; and then we shall have brain fever, all but Professor Laski. And I suspect that the complexities are already much more complex than the *Introduction to Politics* gives us to understand. At the American University at which I was partly "educated" there used to be a course of lectures called "Government I": and this "course" gave one just such a view of how governments were meant to work, if they worked at all, as Mr. Laski's essay.[3]

Finding, then, Mr. Laski's account as useful as a catalogue of spare parts for a motor car which is no longer manufactured, I turned hopefully in the direction of Lord Lymington. *Ich Dien: The Tory Path* – here, surely I should find not merely an abstract scheme, but something to which my human emotions could respond. And, amongst the details there is much to which "the true Tory, however inarticulate and instinctive his action" [16], as Lord Lymington says, can indeed respond. Perhaps the weakness is that Lord Lymington seems to think of Toryism as something to be revived, instead of something to be invented. There are, and have been, Tories; but it is doubtful whether there has ever been any continuous Tory party of which individual Tories have much reason to be proud. The author says "Toryism is often gibed at as a relic of feudalism" [13]. If that is so, it goes to show a widespread ignorance of feudalism. The great feudal nobles might just as genuinely be assimilated to Whiggism. I wonder whether the Bigods and the Bohuns, or the members of any of the great twelfth-century families who put their names to Magna Charta – the Clares or the Mowbrays, De Roos or Albini – could have been made to understand the patriotic devotion to King and Country which Lord Lymington would inculcate: I fear that their attitude would have been moderately cynical.[4] The romance of Toryism begins with the Stewarts; even with the political theories of a pedantic foreign monarch and the devotion of a number of modest county families to a foreign house.[5]

This is not to say that there is no thread of continuity in Toryism; but the thread runs through the "inarticulate and instinctive"; and Toryism is never quite justly represented by Bolingbroke, or by the Conservative philosophy of Burke, or by the daring innovations of Disraeli. And if there is one idea, however vague, by which Toryism may be tried, it is the idea, however vague, represented by the phrase "Church and State." Lord Hugh Cecil, in his little exposition of "Conservatism" (published some years ago in the Home University Library), was not altogether clear or satisfactory; but his was the voice of orthodoxy compared to Lord Lymington.[6] This is not a minor test, for Toryism. Unless Toryism maintains a definite and uncompromising theory of Church and State, Toryism is merely a fasces of expedients.[7] And we hear from Lord Lymington that:

> The Church should be represented as it is to-day, but the Church of England, because it has ceased to be the religion of the people as it was four hundred years ago, should share its representation with those great bodies of religion whose leaders will take the oath to the Crown. [29]

There is a metaphor of "selling the pass";[8] we should have a new one, for Lord Lymington's benefit, of (to vary a phrase of Bolingbroke's) "sueing for subserviency at the doors of every sect in the world."[9] I have never encountered a more satisfying example of misunderstanding. To begin with, the Church is not "represented" in the House of Lords, as various interests might be. Lord Lymington conceives of the upper house as an ideal syndicalist assembly: in which the Church should be represented, just as Big Business is represented – the bankers (blowing into their keys), the brewers, the newspaper magnates, and last come the bishops. The bankers represent so many millions who have bank accounts; the bakers represent so many millions who buy bread and crumpets; the brewers so many millions who drink beer; then the press; then the distillers; and finally the bishops represent so many thousand communicants. But as the Church of England has ceased to be the religion of the people, we must have, in our perfect Tory Democracy, amongst the bankers, newsagents and brewers and distillers who represent popular interests, representatives of the Baptist, Seventh Day Adventist, and Christian Science interests. And again, I feel rather abashed, after examining Lord Lymington's conception of the House of Lords, to find that I, as an individual, am there over-represented. The bankers represent me, because I have a bank account; the brewers represent me, because I drink beer; the distillers, because I drink whisky; the newsagents, because I take in *The Times*; the steamship magnates, because I occasionally travel (not, surely, because I may own shares or debentures of their lines). Surely I ought to be content to share my religious representation "with those great bodies of religion whose leaders will take the oath to the Crown." And should the Crown take no oath to religion?

This is not a small matter, or a debating point. Lord Lymington, like Mr. Laski, wants a state in which government shall be designed for the happiness of the governed; but as alternatives to Communism, both outlines seem to me drearily incapable of arousing enthusiasm. Within limits, a political ideal ought to be made to appear desirable whether it actually *succeeds* or not. Far too much of our current criticism of Russia has been founded on nothing more secure than this criterion of success: year in year out, our newspapers were wont to sneer at Bolshevism by little pieces of information and statistics aimed to persuade us that the Russian system was incompetent to handle the problem of production and distribution even well enough to keep the mass of the population from starving. But perhaps the present government of Russia *will* succeed, and what then? We shall have to fall back ignominously, rather late in the day, upon our moral convictions. So long as the Bolsheviks appear to be making a mess of material things, our newspapers concentrate on statistics; but if they should succeed in running their country efficiently and attending to the people's bodies, we should begin to hear a great deal more about the harm they are doing to the people's souls. What matters is not whether they have carried out the programme of Marx, or whether they have betrayed it, or whether they have improved upon it; the point is that their philosophy is equally repugnant whether it fails or succeeds. And we can only oppose it with another which shall be correspondingly dear to us whether it succeeds or fails. The Bolsheviks at any rate believe in something which has what is equivalent for them to a supernatural sanction; and it is only with a genuine supernatural sanction that we can oppose it. So I regret that Mr. Laski and Lord Lymington (the latter of whom, at least, should have known better) should pay such scant respect both to religious establishments and to the theological foundations of political philosophy. The theory of nationalism, as advanced in Italy, is not good enough; it becomes both artificial and ridiculous.[10] Mr. Bernard Shaw, with his clear but quite irresponsible mind, and his humorous appreciation of Italy and Russia, has been doing his best to bring the old-fashioned William Morris and Fabian Socialism into disrepute.[11]* The only hope is in a Toryism which, though not necessarily distinct for Parliamentary purposes, should refuse to identify itself philosophically with that "Conservatism" which has been overrun first by deserters from Whiggism and later by business men. And for such a Toryism not only a doctrine of the relation of the temporal and spiritual in matters of Church and State is essential, but even a religious foundation for the whole of its political philosophy.[12]* Nothing less can engage enough respect to be a worthy adversary for Communism.

And even in certain details, Lord Lymington's Toryism seems to be inverted. Like all good conservatives he is solicitous, and rightly, about the future of the Land of Britain. But too often the problem has been put before us as primarily an economic or even a military one; and in even a short essay like this – which is not, after all, merely a memorandum of measures for the moment – one would like to see the situation put another way about. The essential point is that agriculture ought to be saved and revived because agriculture is the foundation for the Good Life in any society; it is in fact the normal life. What matters is not that we should grow the bulk of our own wheat, even if that were possible, in pursuit of the chimera of independence; but that the land of the country should be used and dwelt upon by a stable community engaged in its cultivation. If tariffs will help, let us have tariffs, but that is a question of means.[13] No one would pretend that life on the land is a very good one for a man with a family, whose wage is only a few shillings more than the dole; but agricultural life is capable of being the best life for the majority of any people. And it is hardly too much to say that only in a primarily agricultural society, in which people have local attachments to their small domains and small communities, and remain, generation after generation, in the same place, is genuine patriotism possible: not the artificial patriotism of the press, of political combinations and unnatural frontiers and the League of Nations. The contrast is admirably stated in a small book recently published, the title of which, after these reflections on the state of Britain, is distinctly cheering: *Décadence de la Nation Française*, by R. Aron and A. Dandieu (Reider: Paris).[14]

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. Harold J. Laski (1893-1950), socialist political theorist, since 1926 Professor of Political Science, London School of Economics. On 23 Aug 1928, TSE invited Laski to contribute to a symposium on Bernard Shaw's *Intelligent Woman's Guide to Socialism* (*L4* 231), published in the *Criterion* for Dec 1928 (191-94).

Gerard Wallop, Viscount Lymington (1898-1984), since 1929 Conservative MP for Basingstoke. TSE took an interest in Lymington's writings on agriculture advocating national self-sufficiency and published his next book *Horn, Hoof and Corn* at Faber, reviewed favorably in the *Criterion* for Oct 1932 by Rolf Gardiner.

2. TSE refers to recent financial scandals. Albert Oustric (1887-1971) was a French banker whose fraudulent market speculation resulted in the criminal bankruptcy of the Banque Oustric in 1930. Marthe Hanau (1886-1935) used her newspaper *La Gazette du Franc* to attract investors to buy shares in fraudulent schemes and bribed politicians for their support; however, the fraud came to light and she was arrested in Dec 1928. Albert B. Fall, US Secretary of the Interior, leased oil production rights over Navy Oil Reserves (including at Teapot Dome Oil Field in Wyoming) to private oil companies without a competitive bidding process. In 1929, Fall was found guilty of accepting bribes and sentenced to prison. In the Marconi scandal (1912), members of Asquith's Liberal government were accused of insider trading by purchasing shares in Marconi's American subsidiary, thus making use of confidential government reports for personal enrichment. In 1931, TSE wrote a Faber book report on Richard Lewinsohn's study of political corruption, *Das Geld in der Politik* [Money in Politics], which contained an account of the Marconi scandal (it was not published in English).

3. TSE studied "Government I: Constitutional Government" at Harvard in 1906–07 with Professor Abbott Lawrence Lowell and Assistant Professor William Bennett Munro. In 1919, Lowell defended Laski from political calls for him to be barred from teaching Harvard students.

4. TSE names some of the feudal barons who enforced the Magna Carta (Latin for the great charter) of 1215 limiting the powers of King John. Signatories included Roger Bigod, Earl of Norfolk and Suffolk, and his son Hugh Bigod; Henry de Bohun, Earl of Hereford; Richard de Clare, Earl of Hertford and his son Gilbert de Clare; William de Mowbray, Lord of Axholme Castle; Robert de Ros (or Roos), Baron of Helmsley; and William d'Aubigny (or d'Albini), Lord of Belvoir Castle.

5. From 1597 to 1599, James VI of Scotland – later to become the first Stuart or Stewart King of England – wrote *The True Law of Free Monarchies* and *Basilikon Doron* (*Royal Gift*), in which he set out a theological basis for the divine right of kings.

6. In "Political Theorists" (1927), TSE referred to Hugh Cecil's *Conservatism* (1912) as "rather milk-and-watery" (3.137).

7. "fasces" (OED): "A bundle of rods bound up with an axe in the middle and its blade projecting. These rods were carried by lictors before the superior magistrates at Rome as an

emblem of their power." TSE alludes to the totalitarian politics of Fascism in his "Commentary" for Feb 1928 (3.333).

8. "to sell the pass" (OED): "to betray one's countrymen, by giving information to the authorities"

9. "It has been zeal without knowledge, and a strange subserviency to private interests, which have almost exhausted this country, and defeated all our endeavor for the public good since that time." *The Works of Lord Bolingbroke*, 4 vols (Philadelphia: Carey and Hart, 1841), 460.

10. For TSE's critique of Italian nationalism, see "The Literature of Fascism" (1928) (3.540).

11*. TSE's note: "The best criticism that I have seen of Mr. Shaw's recent drollings about Russia, is a letter by Canon Oliver Quick, in *The Times* of August 17th." Quick (1885-1944) observed that Communism's "rigorously enforced religion is the anti-religion which denies eternal reality *in toto*, and consequently makes the temporal survival, not of the individual, but of the State, the only end of life." "Mr. Shaw on Russia," *The Times* (17 Aug 1931), 6.

12*. TSE's note: "See an admirable essay on *The State and Freedom*, by the Rev. Charles Smyth, in *Christendom*, June, 1931: 'The Royal Supremacy is not Erastian in its implications, because the King is a *persona mixta*, something less than a priest, but something more than a layman; he is both a secular and an ecclesiastical person; and it is the orthodox theory of the Church of England that it is his office to administer the State through his secular officers, and the Church through his spiritual officers (not excluding laymen, for they also are *viri ecclesiastici*, churchmen).'" "The State and Freedom," *Christendom*, 1 (June 1931), 119–20.

13. The Conservative Party was currently advocating Tariff Reform in order to protect British industry and agriculture.

14. On the basis of his esteem for this right-wing critique of French society, TSE commissioned an article from Robert Aron (1898-1975) and Arnaud Dandieu (1897-1933), editors of *L'Ordre nouveau*, which was published in the *Criterion* for Dec 1932 (185-99).

A review of *Fashion in Literature: A Study of Changing Taste*, by E. E. Kellett

London: Routledge, 1931. Pp. 369.

The English Review, 53 (Oct 1931) 634-36

Mr. Kellett is writing on a subject on which he has already shown himself something of an authority.[1] In this book of 369 pages he seems to me to have missed a most interesting opportunity, or both of two opportunities. He might have written a philosophical and psychological treatise on the enjoyment of art and literary art in particular: for such an investigation Mr. Kellett is perhaps not fully qualified. But for a detailed historical account of the major changes of literary taste in England no one is better equipped. He has a great variety of surprising and pertinent learning; and he knows how to apply it without pedantry, in such a way as to illuminate the matter and enliven the style of his discourse. Neither of these interesting lines of investigation is that which Mr. Kellett has chosen to take. We cannot blame the author for not performing what he has not undertaken; yet we may regret that Mr. Kellett has provided merely a superior Guide to literary Self-Culture, of a much more advanced grade than the primers of Arnold Bennett and such exponents.[2]

After a preliminary chapter on Taste in general, which displays much etymological knowledge without, I feel, getting us very far in any direction, Mr. Kellett discusses Literary Taste in particular, Criticism, and the Rise of Conscious Art.[3] He then, in successive chapters, considers the several chief excesses into which literary fashions may fall: e.g. preciosity, ingeniosity, allegory, the grotesque, and so on.[4] On all these matters he usually says the right thing, or at least one of the right things to be said. This is the book to put in the hands of those defective lovers of literature – and they form a numerous class – who do not understand why it might be worth their while to enlarge their appreciation of literature, and those others who desire to do so but do not know how to go about it.

Accepting the scope and design of the book for what they are, I find still two points on which I wish Mr. Kellett had expatiated. He perorates:

> Let us then endeavour to cultivate a catholic and generous taste; to read widely if not voraciously, and to welcome works of all kinds and of almost every rank: to find room in our sympathies not merely for the great but for the little, not merely for the exquisite but for the rough – nay, not merely for the good but for an occasional experience of the bad. [353]

It is true that Mr. Kellett has warned the reader not to strain at studying literature from which he extracts no pleasure whatever, but on the contrary to hold fast to what he really enjoys, and to seek to enlarge his enjoyment from this centre. I wish, nevertheless that he had asserted that for each one of us there must be a limit of enjoyment; that although some persons can have a much greater field of taste than others, complete catholicity is a chimera. If we try to enlarge our appreciation too much, we may diminish the intensity of enjoyment. If we were born with a catholic taste, it would be indistinguishable from no taste at all. In our enjoyment of literature much else must enter besides pure literary enjoyment; and our preference of subject matter, our affinity with particular personalities, and other such limitations must condition not only our enjoyment but our appreciation – for though enjoyment and appreciation are not the same thing, they must tend to concur. This consideration might have led Mr. Kellett to give some fuller account of why taste *must* change from age to age; and why each generation must be attracted to some past periods of literature and repelled from others.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. E. E. Kellett (1864-1950), retired English master at the Leys School, Cambridge, author of *The Story of Myths* (1927), reviewed in the *Criterion* for Sept 1928, and *The Whirligig of Taste* (1929), anonymously reviewed in the *Criterion* for Oct 1929. The *Criterion* review of *The Whirligig of Taste* (170-71) possibly by TSE, summarized the book as follows: "The core of his belief, if he has a belief, is that the only thing we can be certain of is the inevitable procession of Change" (170). On 8 Oct 1931, Kellett wrote to thank TSE for reviewing *Fashion in Literature*. TSE replied on 14 Oct: "If, as you say, I have created an example among reviewers it is still more certain that you have created an example of courtesy for authors with books reviewed" (*L5* 688).

2. Bennett's practical guide *Literary Taste: How to Form It* (1911) went through ten editions up to 1918.

3. Kellett relates the meaning of "taste" in general to its etymological derivation from the Latin *tangere* "to touch." TSE refers to Kellett's chapters on "Literary Taste in General" (chapter 3), "Criticism" (chapter 5), and "The Rise of Conscious Art" (chapter 6).

4. Kellett devotes full chapters to the following literary "fashions": "Hyperbole," "The Taste for the Precious," "The Taste for the Ingenious," "The Taste for Allegory," "The Grotesque," "The Austere," "The Didactic in Poetry," "Art for Art's Sake," "The Sentimental," "Puritanism and Antipuritanism," "'Realism,'" and "The Taste for the Exotic."

Preface to *Transit of Venus: Poems*, by Harry Crosby

Paris: The Black Sun Press, 1931. Pp. 62; Preface, i-ix[1]

I doubt whether we can ever understand the poetry of a contemporary; especially if we are engaged in writing ourselves. This remark will not seem surprising, or anything more than commonplace, if we stop to try to understand the limited and peculiar sense in which we may be said to "understand" poetry at all. In the senses in which we "understand" a mathematical demonstration, a philosophical reasoning, a legal argument, a variety of scientific demonstrations, an historical account – and I do not say that this is all one kind of understanding either – poetry may have a greater or less understandable element, according to its particular types. The more there is to understand, in this sense, the more easily is the poetry "understood"; which is why the poetry of Pope, let us say, appears easier to understand than that of Rimbaud.[2] What the public wants, on the whole, is something safely between two extremes. Whatever contains a considerable rational element, as the poetry of Pope and Dryden, of Lucretius, of Sir John Davies – to take a few names at random – is rejected as "prosaic"; whatever consists of too concentrated and exact a sequence and arrangement of image and rhythm is rejected as "obscure."[3] The majority of people can get no emotional excitement, but only fatigue, from intellectual effort; the majority is unable to apprehend any exact emotion economically recorded. These observations, if true, may help to explain why a certain public enjoys the works of Mrs. Wilcox, which give it the pleasure of which it is capable without the comparatively immense mental effort needed to enjoy the work of her masters, Tennyson, Browning and Swinburne.[4]

Harry Crosby's verse was consistently, I think, the result of an effort to record as exactly as possible to his own satisfaction a particular way of apprehending life. When I first read some of his poems I concluded merely that he was a young man in a hurry; but I must add now that of being in a hurry there are two distinct kinds.[5] To be in a hurry to get to a clearly conceived destination, a destination which is only clearly conceived because others have already arrived there and charted the country, usually results in a short journey, in the secondhand rhythms and imagery of the facile half-successes which are common in our and perhaps every time. But Crosby was in a hurry, I think, because he was aware of a direction, and ignorant of the destination, only conscious that time was short and the terminus a long way off. Incidentally he was, it seems to me, unlike most of his contemporaries, indifferent, in his exploring interest, to whether what he wrote on the way should be poetry or not; and I do not see how anyone can go very far in poetry who is not ready to risk complete failure, or, for the most part, who does not in fact commit a great deal of failure on the way. The poet of the greatest possibilities, I believe, is disgusted always with what he has already done: or rather, relatively disgusted, for we must turn even our greatest failures to great account. I cannot admit any easy distinction between *promise* and *achievement*; for the admission of promise is a recognition of something already there; and every real achievement, in spite of the brevity of life, should be a promise of something further. Not, of course, that this continuing promise is anything but disconcerting to the majority even of the most sympathetic readers; we must all be ready to risk the imputation of having gone too far.

Poets arrive at originality by different routes. Some, by progressive imitation; though the word *imitation* is truly applicable only to the successes of the negligible; for those who have something in them, the process is rather towards a finding of themselves by a progressive absorption in, and absorption of, and rejection (but never a total rejection) of other writers. Others, like Crosby, have little of this absorptive and rejective faculty; they feel from the beginning, however immaturely and with however many false explanations and misunderstandings, what they are out for. It would be, I think, premature to speak of Crosby as having had a "philosophy" or even a definite point of view; the theories, or partial theories, which seem to have been implements for him, may only mislead us; and we must be patient to be able to read a man's writing, to perceive a new vitality in it, to recognize that real vitality is never aimless, yet not to speculate upon the aim itself. In this case, we need only admit that there was an aim, a direction. And in such a case we should expect to find, as I think we do find in Crosby's writings, that we do not pick out single poems for enjoyment: if any of it is worth reading, then it all is.

I am far from asserting, it follows naturally, that I understand in the least what Crosby was up to, or that I am sure I should like it if I did. I doubt whether anyone himself engaged in the pursuit of poetry can "like," any more than he can "understand," the work of his contemporaries; if it is wholly unrelated to one's own efforts it is irrelevant, and if it has some relation it is merely disturbing. But "liking" is itself irrelevant in a serious matter like poetry; though it be appropriate enough in such international amenities as Mr. Hugh Walpole's chairmanly introductions of American novelists to the British public.[6] The testimony is the more valuable, I maintain, for the absence of this gentlemanly motive. What I do like, in a serious sense, is the fact that Crosby was definitely going his own way, whether I like the way or not. And in spite of occasional conventional phrases – so conventional as perhaps to be deliberate – I am more interested in his work because of its imperfections, its particular way of being imperfect. What interests me the most, I find, is his search for a personal symbolism of imagery. Not that the scheme of imagery which he was using was necessarily exact, or corresponded finally to what his mind was reaching for; he might, I dare say, in time have scrapped it all in favour of some other. But here, I am sure, is a right and difficult method. A final intelligibility is necessary; but that is only the fruit of much experiment and of mature synthesis; but Crosby was right, very right, in looking for a set of symbols which should relate each of his poems to the others, to himself, rather than using in each poem symbols which should merely relate it to other poems by other people. Even to speak of a "set of symbols" is clumsy; for such a phrase suggests a lifeless, not a living and developing scheme.

And the word "*symbolism*" is unfortunately one which must be safeguarded. It suggests, I fear inevitably, (as does the word *metaphysical*) a particular group of poets; and even does these poets, the best of them, an injustice by isolating them from poetry in general. It almost intimates that there is a particular recipe; or that this is merely one way of writing among others; or that poets can be distinguished clearly as symbolist and nonsymbolist. Symbolism is that to which the word tends both in religion and in poetry; the incarnation of meaning in fact; and in poetry it is the tendency of the word to mean as much as possible. To find the word and give it the utmost meaning, in its place; to mean as many things as possible, to make it both exact and comprehensive, and really to *unite* the disparate and remote, to give them a fusion and a pattern with the word, surely this is the mastery at which the poet aims; and the poet is distinguished by making the word do more *work* than it does for other writers. Of course one can "go too far" and except in directions in which we can go too far there is no interest in going at all; and only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out just how far one can go. Not to go far enough is to remain "in the vague" as surely and less creditably than to exceed. Indeed, the mentors of pseudoclassicism should consistently content themselves with agnosticism, or at most with the simple faith of Islam; for no extravagance of a genuine poet can go so far over the borderline of ordinary intellect as the Creeds of the Church. And the poet who fears to take the risk that what he writes may turn out not to be poetry at all, is a man who has surely failed, who ought to have adopted some less adventurous vocation.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Harry Crosby (1898-1929), American poet and World War I veteran, used his wealth to co-found with his wife, Caresse, the Black Sun Press in Paris in 1927. In Dec 1929, Crosby committed suicide in a New York hotel after shooting his lover Josephine Bigelow, possibly in a suicide pact. Caresse Crosby commissioned TSE's preface to a new edition of *Transit of Venus* in 1930. On 10 Sept 1931, TSE sent his preface to her explaining: "I am more than dissatisfied with what I have done and enclose, not so much on account of its brevity (I am always shortwinded) but on account of its poverty of ideas; and I am afraid that it will sound rather listless" (*L5* 658). It was published in November in a limited edition of 500 copies.

2. On 11 Nov 1930, TSE discussed with Caresse Crosby a Black Sun Press edition of Rimbaud, whose poetry and adventurous lifestyle Harry Crosby admired (*L5* 383).

3. In his 1930 introduction to Samuel Johnson's satires, TSE remarks: "We are inclined to use 'prosaic' as meaning not only 'like prose,' but as 'lacking poetic beauty' – and the Oxford and every other dictionary give us warrant for such use. Only, we ought to distinguish between poetry which is like *good* prose, and poetry which is like *bad* prose" (4.170).

4. In "Donne in our Time" (1931), TSE included the deceased popular poet Ella Wheeler Wilcox among the class of poets who can be enjoyed without being admired, since they "can be enjoyed only if we delude ourselves into believing that they give us genuinely that which they are merely imitating" (4.371).

5. TSE met Harry and Caresse Crosby in Paris in Apr 1926 at an exhibition at Sylvia Beach's bookshop. Crosby sent TSE his preface to *Transit of Venus*. On 26 Oct 1927, TSE returned it saying he had read it "with much interest . . . As I did not know the work of the man you are introducing there is very little that I can say about it" (*L3* 781).

6. On 29 Oct 1930, TSE declined an invitation to write an introduction to a reprint of Mark Van Doren's 1920 book on Dryden, commenting: "I feel that I have been writing rather too many introductions and prefaces lately, and one's value as an introducer is very easily exhausted by multiplying this work of chairmanship. Chesterton, for instance, is now about zero and Hugh Walpole, of course, considerably below that degree" (*L5* 365). On 31 Dec 1922, in a letter to his brother Henry, TSE praised Sinclair Lewis's novel *Babbitt*, introduced by Walpole (*L1* 816).

Donne in our Time[1]

It is, I know, a tercentenary 1631-1931; but for my own experience within the terms of this paper, our time is roughly 1906-1931.[2] I mean that Professor Briggs used to read, with great persuasiveness and charm, verses of Donne to the Freshmen at Harvard assembled in what was called, as I remember, "English A."[3] I confess that I have now forgotten what Professor Briggs told us about the poet; but I know that whatever he said, his own words and his quotations were enough to attract to private reading at least one Freshman who had already absorbed some of the Elizabethan dramatists, but who had not yet approached the metaphysicals. I can from that point trace uncertainly the progress of my own relations with Donne, but I cannot account for his general emergence towards tercentenary fame. I know that when I came to London I heard more of Donne, in social conversation, than I had heard before. It was partly because Desmond MacCarthy talked enthusiastically about Donne; and everyone knew that MacCarthy had for years been designing to write a book about him. MacCarthy's book, I am sorry to say, has not yet been written – no one really expected that it would be.[4] But however, through however many influences, for whatever reasons, Donne came to be a poet with whom every intellectual undergraduate in English-speaking countries had at least to profess familiarity, I know that by 1926, when I gave some lectures on Donne, the subject was already popular, almost topical; and I know that by 1931 the subject has been so fully treated that there appears to me no possible justification of turning my lectures into a book.[5]

It is not exactly that anyone has actually written a definitive book. True, there are books so good that there is little pretext at present for writing another. Miss Ramsay's French dissertation is extraordinarily informative, though it promulgates opinions about Donne which I think we have outgrown; Professor Grierson, in his introduction to his anthology of metaphysical poets as well as in his introduction and notes to his great edition of the poems, combines to an uncommon degree fine scholarship with sensitive perception; Mr. Mario Praz, in one long essay, joins the latter gift to a unique knowledge of the whole of European poetry contemporary with Donne; Mr. John Hayward has brought out a volume which contains the whole of the verse and excellent selection from the prose; Mr. George Williamson has written a book admirably relating the poetry of Donne to that of his followers and to some of the poetry of recent times; and M. Pierre Legouis has said for us nearly all that we want to say about Donne's metric. Yet, admirably and thoroughly as the subject has been handled, there might still be place for another book on Donne: except that, as I believe, Donne's poetry is a concern of the present and the recent past, rather than of the future.[6]

I by no means wish to affirm that the importance of a particular poet, or of a particular type of poetry, is merely a matter of capricious fashion. I wish simply to distinguish between the absolute and the relative in popularity, and to recognise in the relative (both when a poet is unduly preferred and when he is unduly ignored) an element of the reasonable, the just and the significant. And a study of the popularity of Donne, and the various theories held about him, can illustrate this distinction very nicely.

We must assume, if we are to talk about poetry at all, that there is some absolute poetic hierarchy; we keep at the back of our minds the reminder of some end of the world, some final Judgment Day, on which the poets will be assembled in their ranks and orders. In the long run, there is an ultimate greater and less. But at any particular time, and we exist only in particular moments of time, good taste consists, not in attaining to the vision of Judgment Day, and still less in assuming that what happens to be important for us now is certainly what will be important in the same way on that occasion, but in approximating to some analysis of the absolute and the relative in our own appreciation. The principle, if valid, must apply of course to all art; but it is convenient, and an aid to precision, if one limits the field to that department of art which one knows best.[7]

That there was an element of fashion in our enjoyment and exploitation of Donne it would be vain to deny; but there was nothing capricious about the fashion. For at any particular moment it may happen that the poets who are beginning to write find a particular poet, or a particular type or school of poetry, such as Donne and the school of Donne – and for our time Laforgue and some other French poets as well – with whom or which they have close sympathy, and through whom or which they elicit their own talents.[8] The next generation of analytical literary historians may dispute indefinitely as to *why* we were like that. And it is impossible for us or for anyone else ever to disentangle how much was genuine affinity, genuine appreciation, and how much was just a *reading into* poets like Donne our own sensibility, how much was "subjective." However many grains of subjectivity may have gone to the prescription does not exactly matter, for the reason that there must always be such an ingredient at any time when any past poet is especially enjoyed. We may even say with some confidence that we probably understand sympathetically Donne to-day better than poets and critics fifty years hence will understand him; it is equally probable that they of fifty years hence will understand somebody else, possibly Milton, or Victor Hugo, much better than we do. I allow for the chance of complete self-deception: if we have written nothing that will stand "the test of time," then it is likely that the reputation of Donne will sink relatively as ours sinks. And all this, it should be superfluous to add, has nothing whatever to do with literary Pyrrhonism.[9] Width of literary appreciation extends between two theoretical poles, neither of which we quite reach in practice: the enjoyment of writers whom we love without admiring, and the enjoyment of writers whom we admire without loving. The discipline of the critic is to learn on what grounds *not* to admire the poets whom he primarily loves, and to learn to love a little those poets whom he only frigidly admires. We must only finally exclude those who, like the late Miss Wilcox, can be enjoyed only if we delude ourselves into believing that they give us genuinely that which they are merely imitating.[10]

The progress of the reputation of Donne in the last twenty years or so is a curious chapter in the history of reputations. First he was supposed to be "mediaeval"; and our notions of "mediaeval" have themselves undergone change. This adjective was forcibly propelled at Donne by Miss Ramsay.[11] Fortunately, however, Miss Ramsay provided in the body of her book a mass of information which enables us to question the conclusions set out in her foreword. That Donne was well read in scholastic philosophy is undoubted; but there is no reason to suppose that he was any better read than Hooker, or that he was so deeply influenced by mediaeval thought as Hooker. Donne had also read or consulted all the principal theological writers up to date; he had also read the Protestant authorities and had read pretty widely in still more heretical authors; it is pertinent to remember that his great grandmother was a sister of Sir Thomas More, who translated Pico della Mirandola. In short, he had read just what any omnivorous theological and philosophical scholar of his time might have been expected to read. His mind was decidedly the mind of a man of his own time: but it was legal and controversial rather than philosophical and theological. In our time, he might have been a very great company lawyer.

In his whole temper, indeed, Donne is the antithesis of the scholastic, of the mystic and of the philosophical system maker. The encyclopaedic ambitions of the schoolmen were directed always towards unification: a *summa* was the end to be attained, and every branch of knowledge and practice was to have its relation to the whole. In Donne, there is a manifest fissure between thought and sensibility, a chasm which in his poetry he bridged in his own way, which was not the way of mediaeval poetry.[12] His learning is just information suffused with emotion, or combined with emotion not essentially relevant to it. In the poetry of Dante, and even of Guido Cavalcanti, there is always the assumption of an ideal unity in experience, the faith in an ultimate rationalisation and harmonisation of experience, the subsumption of the lower under the higher, an ordering of the world more or less Aristotelian.[13] But perhaps one reason why Donne has appealed so powerfully to the recent time is that there is in his poetry hardly any attempt at organisation; rather a puzzled and humorous shuffling of the pieces; and we are inclined to read our own more conscious awareness of the apparent irrelevance and unrelatedness of things into the mind of Donne.

But to suggest that Donne was not a believer, in the sense in which it was a category of mediaeval thought that there was a unity in existence, a relation of real to ideal, which was not beyond the mind of man to trace in its outlines, is not to imply that he was, in the modern sense, a sceptic.[14] To say that his cast of mind was such as made impossible for him to be a constructive philosopher or a mystic is not to say that he knew *doubt* as the modern world has known it. The metaphysician and the mystic work differently and with different tools; but alike for metaphysics and for mysticism a unification which was required which was alien to Donne. On the other hand, it was still possible for Donne to be, and I am sure that he was, genuinely *devout*. But he was a sincere churchman not because he had passed through the doubt which his type of mind finds congenial (I say his *type* of mind), but because in theology he had not yet arrived there. In short, his kind of religious belief differs both from that of the thirteenth century and that of the nineteenth and twentieth; it was sincere, but represents a period of transition.

The question of the nature of Donne's religious faith determines our solution of the "problem" of his conversion.[15] Nobody now, I suppose, divides Donne's life into two periods, one dissolute and irreligious, the other a revulsion to intense and austere piety, a division so complete as to suggest an alternation of personality.[16] We agree that it is one and the same man in both early and later life. But some of the best informed critics and scholars are still inclined to take for granted a period of debauchery and to emphasize it. Thus a very competent scholar, Mr. John Sparrow (writing in *Theology*, March, 1931) says: "We need only look at one of his earliest poems to see that even in his most dissolute days religion was to Donne something more than a merely intellectual interest."[17] Well, I suppose that this sentence needed saying; and yet I do not think that we have sufficient evidence that Donne was so *very* dissipated; we are in danger of making an attractive romance about him. The able pamphlet of M. Legouis convinces me that we can easily exaggerate the mystical element in such a poem as *The Ecstasy*; but I suspect that we can easily exaggerate the erotic element as well.[18] No one now is likely to follow Sir Edmund Gosse in reading Donne's *Elegies* as exact autobiography.[19] My intention here is not to whitewash the evidence of a dissipated or immoral youth; but merely to affirm that we have no satisfactory evidence, and that it is a point of the very slightest interest anyhow. The courtly cynicism was a poetic convention of the time; Donne's sometimes scoffing attitude towards the fickleness of women may be hardly more than immature bravado; it comes to me with none of the terrible sincerity of Swift's vituperation of the human race.[20] Nor can I take very seriously Donne's later remorse or repentance. It is pleasant in youth to think that one is a gay dog, and it is pleasant in age to think that one *was* a gay dog; because as we grow old we all like to think that we have changed, developed and improved; people shrink from acknowledging that they are exactly the same at fifty as they were at twenty-five – sometimes, indeed, men alter in order to congratulate themselves that they have altered, and not out of inner necessity. If Donne in youth was a rake, then I suspect that he was a conventional rake; if Donne in age was devout, then I suspect that he was conventionally devout. An observation which, even if true, is not necessarily destructive.

The kind of religious faith expressed in Donne's religious writings is wholly consistent with the employment in his poetry of the many scraps of various philosophies which appear there. His attitude towards philosophic notions in his poetry may be put by saying that he was more interested in *ideas* themselves as objects than in the *truth* of ideas. In an odd way, he almost anticipates the philosopher of the coming age, Descartes, as in his sixth Meditation:

> Je conçois donc, aisément, que l'imagination se peut faire de cette sorte, s'il est vrai qu'il y ait des corps; et parce que je ne puis rencontrer aucune

> autre voie pour expliquer comment elle se fait, je conjecture de là probablement qu'il y en a; mais ce n'est que probablement; et quoique j'examine soigneusement toutes choses, je ne trouve pas néanmoins que, de cette idée distincte de la nature corporelle que j'ai en mon imagination, je puisse tirer aucun argument qui conclue avec nécessité l'existence de quelque corps.[21]

I do not mean to suggest that this is a theory to which Donne would immediately have subscribed. But it is a curious parallel: to be interested in philosophies for their own sake, apart from their degree of truth, is not a mediaeval attitude. Donne was, I insist, no sceptic: it is only that he is interested in and amused by ideas in themselves, and interested in the way in which he *feels* an idea; almost as if it were something that he could touch and stroke.[22] To turn the attention to the mind in this way is a kind of creation, because the objects alter by being observed so curiously. To contemplate an idea, because it is present for the moment in my own mind, to observe my emotion colour it, and to observe it colour my emotions, to play with it, instead of using it as a plain and simple meaning, brings often odd or beautiful objects to light, as a deep sea diver inspects the darting and crawling life of the depths; though it may lend itself, this petting and teasing of one's mental objects, to extremities of torturing of language. With Donne it is not, as it is with the Elizabethans in their worst excesses, the word, the vocabulary that is tormented – it is the thought itself. In the poem

> I wonder by my troth, what thou, and I . . .[23]

the *idea* is thoroughly teased and tousled. The choice and arrangement of words is simple and direct and felicitous. There is a startling directness (as often at the beginning of Donne's poems) about the idea, which must have occurred to many lovers, of the abrupt break and alteration of the new life. These *trouvailles*[24] themselves are enough to set Donne apart from some of his imitators: Cowley never found anything so good. But the usual course for Donne is not to pursue the meaning of the idea, but to arrest it, to play catlike with it, to develop it dialectically, to extract every minim of the emotion suspended in it. And as to the poetic justification of this method of dialectic I have no doubts; on this point Mr. Praz sees much more clearly than M. Legouis.[25]

M. Legouis, however, has come as near as anyone to stripping the criticism of Donne's lyrical verse of irrelevant attributes, and getting to the heart of the matter. As long as we thought of Donne as a mediaeval, as a philosopher, as a rake turned devout, or a convert, we did not see his poetry as it is. Donne is not even an absolutely first-rate devotional poet: fine as some of his religious verse is, Crashaw, Herbert and Vaughan each in his limited scope surpasses Donne; and yet Donne is absolutely a greater, poet, a greater master of language, than any of them.[26]

And detaching Donne from his relation to a particular generation, our own, a relation which may never be repeated at any subsequent time, this I think we can say at least. Donne will remain permanently in a higher place than he has occupied before. For he was a great reformer of the English language, of English verse. We may continue always to find him more of a poet, of deeper knowledge and more intense and moving expression, than Dryden; but here we can compare him favourably to Dryden in the very matter in which Dryden deserves our warmest gratitude and admiration. The verse of Dryden was once thought artificial, pedestrian and prosaic; just as in a previous century the verse of Donne was thought to be artificial, pedestrian and prosaic, as well as uncouth. But in truth Dryden and Donne are both highly natural; and the merit of both is to have established a natural conversational diction instead of a conventional one. Each effected a revolution of the kind which has to occur from time to time, which will have to occur again in nearly measurable time, if the English language is to retain its vigour.

The revolutionary activity of Donne is not so immediately apparent as that of Dryden, because it began before the previous revolution, that of dramatic blank verse, was exhausted. For the age of Shakespeare, blank verse was the perfect vehicle for impassioned thought, and indeed Shakespeare himself succeeded in getting more thought expressed in great verse than any English poet before or after him.[27] But lyric verse, under these conditions, remained subordinate to the musical instrument and to the dramatic setting – I do not know whether it has been enough remarked that the effect of the lyrics of Shakespeare (and to a less degree, those of some of his contemporaries and followers) is immensely heightened and weighted with meaning by their exact relevance to the dramatic situation which to a thoughtless ear they might seem at times merely to interrupt.

It is hardly too much to say that Donne enlarged the possibilities of lyric verse as no other English poet has done. M. Legouis has pointed out very pertinently how largely his lyrics are dramatic, in monologue and dialogue. The possibilities of this kind of verse, however, were not considerably developed by any of Donne's immediate successors; and however closely they depended upon him for their language, and however they excelled him in various departments of devotional verse, none could follow so delicately the movements of the human mind or the comedy and tragedy of human behaviour and feeling. The path of exploration started by Donne ended in the blind alley of the Pindaric ode of Cowley, and the lyric ran on into tender sentiment, *vers de société* and satire.[28] We must accordingly dissociate Donne from the "school of Donne"; so far as these followers enjoy any particular vogue in our time, it is a popularity reflected from that of Donne, or partly one arising from a new interest in devotional verse. From one point of view, George Herbert is far more to the taste of an admirer of Christina Rossetti than necessarily to the taste of an admirer of Donne.[29] For the technique of verse, and for its adaptibility to purposes, Donne has closer affinity to Browning, to Laforgue and to Corbière. The place of Browning in this group is obscured by several accidents: by the fact that he is often tediously longwinded, that he is far less a wit and ironist, and perhaps more than anything by the fact that his knowledge of the particular human heart is adulterated by an optimism which has proved offensive to our time, though a later age may succeed in ignoring it. Browning, moreover, is perhaps *too* objective, without having that large and intricate pattern which objectivity requires: Donne, Corbière, Laforgue begin with their own feelings, and their limitation is that they do not always get much outside or beyond; Shakespeare, one feels, arrives at an objective world by a process from himself, whoever he was, as the centre and starting point; but too often, one thinks with Browning, here is a world with no particular interesting man inside it, no consistent point of view. But the verse method, in all these four men, is similar: either dramatic monologue or dramatic dialogue; and with Donne and the French poets, the pattern is given by what goes on within the mind, rather than by the exterior events which provoke the mental activity and play of thought and feeling.[30]

But Donne effected not only a development, but a reform, of the language, just as Dryden, in his turn, reformed the language from the excesses of the minor followers of Donne. The minor Elizabethan dramatists sometimes tormented the language; where the content is often quite simple, the expression is perverse. In the verse of Donne the thought is sometimes overingenious and perverse, but the language is always pure and simple. The conceit itself is primarily an eccentricity of imagery, the far-fetched association of the dissimilar, or the overelaboration of one metaphor or simile; only with such writers as Cleveland or Benlowes it tends to corrupt the language itself – because with them, the content of thought and feeling is seldom subtle enough to justify such obscure expression.[31] Donne introduced the natural or conversational style, which the Elizabethans at their best had excelled in producing in a highly sophisticated metric of blank verse, into the lyric; he first made it possible to think in lyric verse, and in a variety of rhythms and stanza schemes which forms an inexhaustible subject of study; and at the same time retained a quality of song and the suggestion of the instrumental accompaniment of the earlier lyric. No poet has excelled him in this peculiar combination of qualities.

The eighteenth-century ear was more attuned to Cowley's verse than to Donne's; hence Cowley was taken as the master and type of this school of verse; attention was concentrated on the abuses, and distracted from the original innovation of Donne; and Donne's character as literary reformer was quite overlooked.[32] Similarly the nineteenth century, though it admitted some grudging praise to Dryden as "reformer," tended to think of this reform as a lamentable necessity which reduced poetry to the low estate of prose; tended to think of it as the substitution of a wild artificiality by a rational one; and laid emphasis upon the Romantic Movement as the one great reform of English verse.[33] But Donne and Dryden were *equally* reformers of the language; both brought in a vital and energetic simplicity, and natural conversational speech in verse. And as for this "naturalness" and "conversational" quality in verse – or indeed in prose – it must be remembered that there is not one permanent and impersonal kind of naturalness and one of artificiality. What is natural in one man is artificial in another; for a style is natural or artificial, just as it may be vigorous or insipid, according to whether it is the right expression of, whether it is in intimate union with, a sincere, because integrated, personality. What is a natural style when written by one man is artificial by another; and the artificial occurs when a man is trying to be, or trying to pretend to be, that which he is not and cannot be. There will always be more of the artificial than the natural in writing; and what is natural today is artificial tomorrow.

Such, I believe, are some of the conclusions of praise which another generation, not enjoying that fulness of satisfaction in Donne that we have felt, will be able to confer upon him. The fascination of the "personality" of an author is an undependable and fluctuating influence upon posterity; the affinity which we find or invent for ourselves and various authors of various periods is uncertain, variable but partly relevant to their greatness.[34] Yet certainly that of Donne is as definite, and as impressive, as that of Montaigne; and we are not wholly fanciful in believing that he has, in the old sense of the word, "prevented" us.[35] The last stage in the discovery and rehabilitation of Donne – if that can be called a rehabilitation which is really an habilitation – is the current applause of his works of divinity. I feel, myself (it is perhaps today an heretical sensation), that the essential originality of Donne is rather in the *Songs and Sonets*, in the *Elegies*, and in the *Satires*, than in the *Sermons*. We find in the gorgeous prose of the last something more than what is there, for we find now and then what is not to be expected, the knowledge of the weaknesses of the human soul, the frankness of admission as of Montaigne, which is not in the view of the greater Jacobean and Caroline divines. But actually (I for one have always been convinced) in the history of English Theology it is not Donne, but Cranmer and Latimer and Andrewes, who are the great prose masters; and for the theologian even the high-sounding Bramhall and the depressive Thorndike are more important names than Donne's.[36] His sermons will disappear as suddenly as they have appeared. For one age or another his personality may be no more interesting than has been, for the last seventy-five years or so (I am not at the moment careful to answer in respect of that reputation), the personality of Byron. But at any time Donne ought always to be recognized as one of the few great reformers and preservers of the English tongue.

THOMAS STEARNS ELIOT

NOTES

1. As printed in *A Garland for John Donne, 1631-1931*, ed. Theodore Spencer
Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1931. Pp. 202; 1-19.

On 7 May 1929, Theodore Spencer, poet and Elizabethan scholar, since 1927 instructor in English at Harvard University, wrote to TSE to solicit a contribution to a symposium on John Donne. TSE replied on 20 May: "The only possible objection is that I have in preparation, not very far advanced, a book on Donne and the metaphysical poets, which may appear, I dare say, in the spring or autumn of 1930" (*L4* 500). TSE was unable to complete the essay before Spencer's initial deadline of 1 Apr 1930, informing Ernest Rhys on 6 Apr 1931 that "I have just finished an essay on Donne promised two years ago" (*L5* 535). *A Garland for John Donne*, published on 1 Dec 1931, was received with consternation by some of TSE's younger followers. William Empson recalled that TSE's essay "made a total change of direction in the flood of critical comment," adding: "Students in essays about Donne are to this day copying out the very unhelpful remarks about him by Eliot." "Donne in the New Edition," *Critical Quarterly*, 8 (Sept 1966), 256.

2. Donne died at the deanery of St. Paul's Cathedral, London, on 31 Mar 1631.

3. TSE took Dean Briggs's freshman course in 1906. In "John Donne" (1923), TSE remarks: "Donne's popularity is neither recent nor limited: he has been approved, for many years, by Mr. Edmund Gosse and Professor Le Roy Barron Briggs" (2:442).

4. TSE's acquaintance, the Bloomsbury critic Desmond MacCarthy, wrote an essay on Donne in 1908, later revised and collected in *Criticism* (1932), but he never completed a full-length study of the poet. Critics have suggested that MacCarthy's reputation as a brilliant talker who nevertheless failed to complete writing projects was reflected in the character of Bernard in Virginia Woolf's experimental novel *The Waves* (1931).

5. TSE refers to his unpublished Clark Lectures (2:609). In the preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928), TSE announced that he was preparing a small volume titled "*The School of Donne*" (3.513), and throughout 1929, he informed several correspondents of his intention to turn his lectures into a book; however, on 18 Nov 1930, he wrote to George Williamson that the appearance of the latter's study *The Donne Tradition* (1930) "renders a good part of my projected work superfluous" (*L5* 391).

6. For TSE's previous discussions of Mary Paton Ramsay's dissertation *Les Doctrines médiévales chez Donne, le poète métaphysicien de l'Angleterre* (1917), see "Rhyme and Reason: The Poetry of John Donne" (4.67, n.5) and (2.597, 628). TSE's "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921) was a review of Grierson's anthology *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century* (2:375). In 1929, Grierson's two-volume 1912 edition of *The Poems of John Donne* was condensed into the single volume *Donne: Poetical Works* in the Oxford Poets series.

Mario Praz's essay on Donne appeared in *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* (1925) and was reviewed by TSE (2:596). John Hayward consulted TSE on editorial matters in the preparation of his 1929 Nonesuch Press edition of Donne's *Complete Poetry and Selected Prose*.

In his preface to *The Donne Tradition: A Study in English Poetry from Donne to the Death of Cowley* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1930), George Williamson (1898-1968), since 1927 a teacher at the University of Oregon, states: "This book was really begun in a small essay on 'The Talent of T. S. Eliot,' which appeared in *The Sewanee Review*" (ix). On 17 Oct 1927, after receiving a copy, TSE thanked Williamson for his "very interesting essay comparing my verse with that of Donne," adding that "I should like very much to see some of your book on Donne before it appears" (*L3* 760). In 1928, Williamson sent TSE chapters of the forthcoming book; his 1930 preface acknowledges a "deep obligation" to TSE, adding "To him also I owe the courtesy of reading part of my book in manuscript" (ix).

Pierre Legouis's *Donne the Craftsman: An Essay upon the Structure of the Songs and Sonets*[*sic*] (1928) offers a detailed analysis of Donne's use of various stanzaic forms and the irregularity of his metric.

7. This principle had recently been tested by TSE's involvement in I. A. Richards's experiments in practical criticism at Cambridge. TSE sent Richards his response to a number of poems and corresponded with him regarding the text of *Practical Criticism: A Study of Literary Judgment* (1929), which included a series of student comments ("protocols") on Donne's sonnet on the Day of Judgment, "At the round earths imagin'd corners, blow."

8. In "The Metaphysical Poets," TSE suggests that "Jules Laforgue, and Tristan Corbière in many of his poems, are nearer to the 'school of Donne' than any modern English poet" (2:382).

9. Pyrrhonism (OED): "A system of skeptical philosophy originally expounded by Pyrrho of Elis; the doctrine of the impossibility of attaining certainty of knowledge; absolute or universal

scepticism." TSE asserts in "Religion without Humanism" (1930): "I believe that the sceptic, even the pyrrhonist, but particularly the humanist-sceptic, is a very useful ingredient in a world which is no better than it is" (4.36).

10. In *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924), I. A. Richards attacked the sentimentality of Ella Wheeler Wilcox's "Friendship after love" and included a poem by her among the unattributed poems examined in his practical criticism classes at Cambridge. In his "London Letter" to the *Dial* for Apr 1921, TSE notes the popularity in America of the recently deceased Wilcox, adding "I intend no disrespect to that lady, whose verse I have read with ease and some pleasure" (2:336).

11. TSE's "progress" refers to the twenty years since the appearance of Grierson's edition *The Poems of John Donne* in 1912, which established the text and canon of Donne's poems and offered a commentary elucidating the depth of Donne's learning. Mary Ramsay's doctoral dissertation tracing Donne's prodigious reading of medieval scholastic philosophy was dedicated to Grierson.

12. TSE publicly modifies the view of Donne set forth in "The Metaphysical Poets": "A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility" (2:380).

13. On 23 Nov 1925, while preparing his Clark Lectures, TSE wrote to Mario Praz that he admired "your comparison and contrast of Donne and Guido Cavalcanti" in *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* (*L2* 786). In his review of this book, TSE publicly praised Praz's "comparison between Donne and the metaphysical poets of the age of Dante" (2:597). Praz argues that Donne, unlike Dante, does not present a system of ideas but employs courtly conventions in the service of a series of expedient exercises of wit.

14. Grierson's 1912 introduction qualifies Donne's displays of scepticism: "A spirit of scepticism and paradox plays through and disturbs almost everything he wrote, except at moments when an intense mood of feeling, whether love or devotion, begets faith, and silences the sceptical and destructive wit by the power of vision rather than of intellectual conviction" (x).

15. The "problem" was the question raised by scholars and critics regarding the sincerity of the "Catholic educated" Donne's embrace of Anglicanism.

16. TSE probably has in mind Hugh l'Anson Fausset's *John Donne: A Study in Discord* (1924) in which a chapter entitled "The Pagan" is immediately followed by "The Penitent." On 5 Nov 1924, TSE told Mary Hutchinson that Fausset's views on Donne were "unsound and shallow" (*L2* 528).

17. "Donne's Religious Development," *Theology*, 22 (Mar 1931), 144-54; here 146. Sparrow proceeds to quote passages from Donne's third satire. On 7 July 1930, TSE wrote to Philippa Whibley that he had lately heard a good deal "about John Sparrow; and all I have heard is to the good" (*L5* 239). John Sparrow (1906-92), since 1929 Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford, published an edition of John Donne's *Devotions upon Emergent Occasions* (1923) as a sixteen-year-old schoolboy at Winchester College.

18. In *Donne the Craftsman* (London: Oxford UP, 1928), Legouis offered a controversial reading of "The Extasie" as a drama of seduction, noting that it was "unlikely and undesirable that married love should be the theme" (70, n.40), explicitly challenging Grierson's account of the poem as an exhibition of Donne's neo-Platonic metaphysic of love.

19. Grierson's 1912 introduction injected a note of scholarly caution regarding the speculative readings of Donne's elegies advanced by Gosse in his influential 1899 critical biography,

commenting: "Whether we can accept in its entirety the history of Donne's early amours which Mr. Gosse has gathered from the poems or not, there can be no doubt that actual experiences do lie behind these poems" (xli).

20. In "Cyril Tourneur" (1930), TSE observes: "Swift had himself enough pettiness as well as enough sin of pride, and lust of dominion, to be able to expose and condemn mankind by its universal pettiness and pride and vanity and ambition; and his poetry, as well as his prose, attests that he hated the very smell of the human animal" (4.203).

21. "Meditation VI," *Œuvres choisies de Descartes* (Paris: Garnier, 1865), 128. [*Trans*: I easily understand, I say, that the imagination could be thus constituted if it is true that body exists; and because I can discover no other convenient mode of explaining it, I conjecture with probability that body does exist; but this is only with probability, and although I examine all things with care, I nevertheless do not find that from this distinct idea of corporeal nature, which I have in my imagination, I can derive any argument from which there will necessarily be deduced the existence of the body.] TSE quotes this passage in his second Clark lecture (2:635).

22. TSE echoes Sparrow's contention in "Donne's Religious Development": "it seems improbable that Donne was ever a sceptic" (146).

23. The opening line of "The good-morrow" (1633)

24. *trouvaille* (OED): "A lucky find; a windfall"

25. In *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra*, Praz examines the nature of Donne's conceits in the context of a general European movement variously called Marinism, Gongorism, or Secentismo. In *Donne the Craftsman*, Legouis seeks to correct Praz's portrait of Donne as a resourceful lawyer pleading a case: "the barrister pleads, disingenuously indeed, but earnestly enough, because he pleads for himself" (71).

26. In his BBC broadcast on "The Devotional Poets of the Seventeenth Century" (1930), TSE explores the relative merits of Donne, Herbert, Crashaw, and Vaughan as "devotional" poets (4.71).

27. In "Christopher Marlowe" (1919), TSE asserts that "blank verse within Shakespeare's lifetime was more highly developed, that it became the vehicle of more varied and more intense feeling than it has ever conveyed since" (2:97).

28. TSE examines Cowley's debt to Donne in his seventh Clark lecture, where he quotes Cowley's Pindaric ode "To Mr. Hobs" (2:732-33).

29. In "The Metaphysical Poets," TSE claims that the poetry of Christina Rossetti echoes the devotional poetry of the seventeenth century (2:375). However, in "George Herbert" (1932), he differentiates sharply between the quality of the religious poetry of Herbert and Rossetti (4.414).

30. TSE's remarks here revise the theory advanced in "The Metaphysical Poets," whereby Browning, unlike Donne or Laforgue and Corbière, was said not to have recovered from the "dissociation of sensibility" that set in during the latter half of the seventeenth century: "Tennyson and Browning are poets, and they think; but they do not feel their thought as immediately as the odour of a rose. A thought to Donne was an experience; it modified his sensibility" (2:380).

31. TSE analyses Donne's use of the metaphysical conceit in his fourth Clark lecture and traces his influence in "fantastical poets, like Cleveland and Benlowes" (2:682-83).

32. In Samuel Johnson's "Life of Cowley" (1779), Donne is treated secondarily as a precursor to Cowley.

33. TSE recalls Matthew Arnold's remarks on the differences between the poetry of Dryden and Pope and that of the nineteenth-century romantic poets: "The poetic language of our eighteenth century in general is the language of men composing *without their eye on the object*, as Wordsworth excellently said of Dryden; language merely recalling the object, as the common language of prose does, and then dressing it out with a certain smartness and brilliancy for the fancy and understanding." *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (London: Macmillan, 1915), 96.

34. In developing his impersonal theory of poetry in "Tradition and the Individual Talent" (1919), TSE suggests that: "Poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion; it is not the expression of personality, but an escape from personality. But, of course, only those who have personality and emotions know what it means to want to escape from these things" (2:111).

35. The first usage of "prevented" (OED) is taken from Francis Bacon's *Of the Proficience and Advancement of Learning, Divine and Human* (1605): "In this same anticipated and preuented knowledge; no man knoweth howe he came to the knowledge hee hath obtained."

36. Herbert Thorndike (ca. 1597-1672), biblical scholar and theologian, wrote *Of the Government of Churches: A Discourse Pointing at the Primitive Form* (1641).

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (London), (19 Dec 1931) 9

Mr. T. S. Eliot asks us to say that his appointment as Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry in the University of HARVARD for 1932-33 which was announced in *The Times* on Thursday, is for seven months only. Mr. Eliot will not relinquish any of the work on which he is regularly engaged in London.[1]

NOTES

1. This clarification regarding the terms of the Norton Professorship for 1932-33 was a response to an announcement in *The Times* for 17 Dec stating that TSE would take up the post "for the year 1932-33" (11). TSE's letter to the editor of that date was not published; it was briefly paraphrased, as above, on 19 Dec under the heading "Telegrams in Brief" (9). TSE explained that he would not be permanently relinquishing his duties at Faber and as editor of the *Criterion*: "I should therefore be grateful for an opportunity to state that the appointment is only for seven months, and that I am not returning permanently to America, and that I am not giving up any of the work in which I am regularly engaged in London" (*L5* 781). He wrote to Herbert Read on the same day to say that he had "no official confirmation myself" from Harvard, adding, "In the meantime will you correct any impression in anybody's mind that I am going to Harvard permanently?" (*L5* 780-81).

TSE had wired his official acceptance of the professorship in Nov, becoming the first American-born lecturer to hold the post since it was endowed in 1925 by the financier and Harvard benefactor Charles Stillman. The terms of the endowment called for the selection of lecturers as men "of high distinction within the field of literature" and brought with it a salary of $9,000.

Charles Whibley[1]

There is a peculiar difficulty, which I experience for the first time, in attempting an estimate of the literary work of a writer whom one remembers primarily as a friend. It is not so much that from a kind of reticence and fear of being uncritical one is inclined to reserve praise: it is rather that one's judgment is inevitably an amalgam of impressions of the work and impressions of the man. Anyone who knew Charles Whibley, and had frequent opportunities of enjoying his conversation, will recognize the strength of the impression which his personality could produce in such intercourse, and the difficulty of valuing the writings which remain, apart from the man who is gone.[2]

What adds to the difficulty is the fact that his true place in history is not altogether to be deduced by posterity merely from the writings he has left; and the fact that a great deal of the work into which he threw himself most zealously is of the kind which will be called ephemeral, or only to be consulted, in future, by some scholarly ferret into a past age. It was largely what is called journalism; so that I hope I shall be tolerated in a digression, which is really a preamble, on the nature of the activity which that word loosely denotes. The distinction between "journalism" and "literature" is quite futile, unless we are drawing such violent contrast as that between Gibbon's *History* and to-night's evening paper; and such a contrast itself is too violent to have meaning.[3] You cannot, that is, draw any useful distinction between journalism and literature merely in a scale of literary values, as a difference between the well-written and the supremely well written: a second-rate novel is not journalism, but it certainly is not literature. The term "journalism" has[4†] deteriorated in the last thirty[5†] years; and it is particularly fitting, in the present essay, to try to recall it to its more permanent sense. To my thinking, the most accurate as well as most comprehensive definition of the term is to be obtained through considering the state of mind, and the type of mind, concerned in writing what all would concede to be the *best* journalism. There is a type of mind, and I have a very close sympathy with it, which can only turn to writing, or only produce its best writing, under the pressure of an immediate occasion; and it is this type of mind which I propose to treat as the journalist's. The underlying causes may differ: the cause may be an ardent preoccupation with affairs of the day, or it may be (as with myself) inertia or laziness requiring an immediate stimulus, or a habit formed by early necessity of earning small sums quickly. It is not so much that the journalist works on different material from that of other writers, as that he works from a different, no less and often more honourable, motive.

The indignity commonly thrown at the journalist is this, that his work is said to be of only passing interest, intended to make an immediate strong impression, and destined to eternal oblivion after that instant effect has been produced. To say merely this, however, is to overlook the reasons for which writing may be "ephemeral," and the loose application of that adjective itself, as well as the curious accidents which protect a piece of writing from oblivion. Those persons who are drawn by the powerful attraction of Jonathan Swift read and re-read with enchanted delight *The Drapier's Letters*; and these letters are journalism according to my hint of a definition, if anything is. But *The Drapier's Letters* are such an important item now in English letters, so essential to anyone who would be well read in the literature of England, that we ignore the accident by which we still read them. If Swift had never written *Gulliver's Travels*, and if he had not played a striking and dramatic part in political life, and if this amazing madman had not supplemented these claims to permanence by a most interesting private life, what would be the place of *The Drapier's Letters* now?[6] They would be praised now and then by some student of Anglo-Irish history of the epoch who happened by some odd coincidence to have also an exceptional degree of literary acumen; and they would be read by nobody else. The same fate would have overcome the pamphleteering of Defoe, were he not the author of *Robinson Crusoe* and *Moll Flanders*; or the pamphleteering of Samuel Johnson, were he not the hero of Boswell.[7] To turn to another great English writer of quite a different kind, let us suppose that John Henry Newman had not been also the great leader of the English Church whose defection Gladstone described as a "catastrophe"; that he had not played the prominent role in the nineteenth century that he did play; supposing also that the material of his *Apologia* was as defunct as the subject of Wood's halfpence in Ireland, who but a few discerning connoisseurs of style would ever read that book now or a century hence? And the *Apologia* of Newman is as surely journalism as is the journalism of Swift, Defoe, or Johnson.[8]

To quote an example on the opposite side: the *Martin Marprelate* tracts are not, certainly, as fine prose as the best of Swift, Defoe, Johnson, or Newman. They belong to a cruder period. But still they contain some very fine passages indeed, and the whole controversy is on a high literary level.[9] Who reads them now? except a very small number of people, those who interest themselves in the religious squabbles of that epoch, and those[10†] who interest themselves in the prose styles of that epoch. They are not considered a part of the necessary education of the cultivated English-speaking person. Literary style is sometimes assigned almost magical properties, or is credited with being a mysterious preservative for subject-matter, which no longer interests. This is far from being absolutely true. Style alone cannot preserve; only good style in conjunction with permanently interesting content can preserve. All other preservation, such as that of Swift's or Defoe's journalism, is due to a happy accident. Even poetry is not immune, though poetry usually concerns itself with simpler and more eternal matters than anything else; for who, except scholars, and except the eccentric few who are born with a sympathy for such work, or others who have deliberately studied themselves into the right appreciation, can now read through the whole of *The Faerie Queene* with delight?[11]

Charles Whibley, then, was a journalist in that he wrote chiefly for occasion, either in his monthly commentary on men, events, and current books; or in his essays and prefaces, or sometimes in a lecture; with the one apparent exception of that charming biographical work, *Lord John Manners and his Friends*.[12] Had he been exactly of my generation, when the typewriter has become the direct means of transmitting even poetry to the page, I am sure that he would have employed that now indispensable engine; as it was, he used suitably a quill pen, but composed rapidly in a fine[13†] hand and made very few *ratures* or corrections.[14] Here again, I may remark, speed and ease are no test of writing one way or the other; and some may hold that the pains of Pater produced less fine prose than the speed of Newman. As for the type of Whibley's style of writing, I think we must look, as we must always look where possible, towards the great writers of the same language in the past with whom the writer has most sympathy, and on whose thoughts his mind has been nourished. His style was fed on the great historical and political writers. Whibley's mind was not an abstract mind; rather, he saw the principle through the act. There is a paragraph beginning his essay "The Trimmer" – an essay on the Marquess of Halifax[15] – which reveals his interest in politics, the angle from which he looked on politics, and the antecedents of his own style:

> Politics is the profession of the second-rate. The man of genius strays into it by accident. We do not need the fingers of both hands to count the statesmen who have served England since the seventeenth century. The Ministers who have served themselves are like the sands number. And from this mob of mediocrities it is not strange that very few writers have emerged. It is not an extravagant claim that they should have some mastery of literary expression. Words are the material of their craft. They know not how to use them save in the cause of rhetoric. Charles James Fox, the world was told, was an accomplished man of letters. To hear him discourse of the Classics was almost as fine an experience as to see him take the bank at faro.[16] And then he wrote a book, and his fame was blown away like a bubble. Halifax and Bolingbroke, Burke and Disraeli – these are secure of remembrance. Where shall you find a fifth?[17]

I regret the qualification "since the seventeenth century," only because I should have liked a reminder of the greater name of Clarendon, with whom, however, Whibley dealt with elsewhere.[18] But the paragraph is most illuminating, both upon Whibley's own style, and upon his judgments of political men. He had a particular sympathy with – and a particular gift for explaining and making sympathetic to his readers – three classes of men of letters: statesmen, gentlemen, and ragamuffins.[19] As for the first I think that the paragraph I have just quoted accounts for a bias of judgment sometimes discernible in his general opinions of statesmen: he may, I think, have somewhat overpraised the virtues, and too much extenuated the faults, of Bolingbroke as a statesman, because of the brilliance and vigour of Bolingbroke's style, and the great attraction of his personality.[20] (On the other hand, he seems to me to have given justice to Manners and Smythe against the more brilliant Disraeli.)[21] However, the relation of a statesman's statesmanship to his prose style is not negligible; we can find interesting laboratory material in the writing of Mr. MacDonald, Mr. Lloyd George, and particularly Mr. Winston Churchill.[22]

People sometimes talk vaguely about the *conversational style* in writing.[23] Still more often, they deplore the divorce between the language as spoken and the language as written. It is true that the spoken and the written language can drift too far apart – with the eventual consequence of forming a new written language. But what is overlooked is that an *identical* spoken and written language would be practically intolerable. If we spoke as we write we should find no one to listen; and if we wrote as we speak we should find no one to read. The spoken and the written language must not be too near together, as they must not be too far apart. Henry James's later style, for instance, is not exactly a conversational style; it is the way in which the later Henry James dictated to a secretary.[24] The famous monologue at the end of *Ulysses* is not the way in which persons of either sex actually *think*: it is a very skilful attempt by a master of language to give the illusion of mental process[25†] by a different medium, that of written words.[26] There is, however, an essential connexion between the written and the spoken word, though it is not to be produced by aiming at a "conversational" style in writing, or a periodic style in speech; and I have found this intimate, though indefinable, connexion between the speech and the writing of every writer whom I have known personally who was a good writer – even between the speech and the most recent writing of Mr. James Joyce. Now, one could not say of Whibley, any more than of anyone else, that he wrote as he talked, or that he talked as he wrote. Nevertheless, his writings have a quality which relates them more closely to his speech than to the writing of anyone else. I know that the word "sincerity" sounds very vague; yet it represents that moral integrity which unites the prose styles of speech and writing of any good writer: however the rhythm, the syntax, the vocabulary may differ. One cannot, obviously, produce negative instances; I can only repeat that whenever I have known both the man and the work of any writer of what seemed to me good prose, the printed word has always reminded me of the man speaking.[27]

One of the phrases of commendation which Whibley often used, at least in conversation, about the style of another writer, was (even when he had little sympathy with the matter) that it had *life* in it; and what makes his own prose hold one's attention, in spite of, perhaps indeed emphasized by, its relation to remote models in the history of English literature, is that it is charged with life. He gives always the impression of fearless sincerity, and that is more important than being always right. One always feels that he is ready to say bluntly what everyone else is afraid to say. Thus a feeling of apprehensiveness, conducive to attention, is aroused in the reader. And, in fact, he was, when he chose to be, a master of invective. Now invective is a form of writing which varies at different times and in different countries according to the customs and laws in vogue at the time and in the place. It is now the fashion to deplore the decay of abuse. Certainly, the rules of the game are altered. Many years ago, in an open letter to Lord John Russell, Disraeli addressed Lord John as an "insignificant insect." I am not aware that a duel, or even a solicitor's letter followed; yet when I used the same phrase about a contemporary in a letter to a journal, my letter was rejected on the ground that it might possibly be considered libellous.[28] Well, that does not matter; for however the rules of the game may be tightened, it is all the more stimulating to the connoisseur in controversy to do what he can according to the actual rules; and once the rules are recognized, a mild statement may carry all the force of a more violent statement under laxer rules. Indeed, I think that we, looking at the daily volleys of that great French master of vituperation, Léon Daudet – who was, incidentally, a friend of Whibley[29] – become fatigued by the very licence which this amazing journalist permits himself, and feel that a little less liberty in abuse would refine the point of sarcasm. When I add to the name of Daudet, that of a master of a very different, and much more austere style, Charles Maurras, I have named with Whibley the three best writers of invective of their time.[30] There is a great deal of fuss nowadays about freedom of speech, but very few persons nowadays care really about genuine *plain speaking*. "Free speech" has become narrowed down to speaking freely about sex, sexual irregularities and sexual perversions; it has become the peculiar privilege of World-Leaguers for Sexual Reform;[31] but few, so far as I am aware, now claim the free speech to call a knave a knave or a fool a fool. *And knaves and fools we both abhorred alike*, says Dryden in his noble epitaph on Oldham; perhaps nowadays our abhorrence is blunted by habituation.[32]

The "Musings Without Method" which Whibley contributed once a month to *Blackwood's* for thirty years, excepting two months, one of which was the last, are the best sustained piece of literary journalism that I know in recent times.[33] Daudet is sometimes tiresome and Maurras sometimes dull, and both are iterative; Mr. Wyndham Lewis, the most brilliant journalist of my generation (in addition to his other gifts) often squanders his genius for invective upon objects which to everyone but himself seem unworthy of his artillery, and arrays howitzers against card houses; but Whibley always had the tact to vary his objects of attack and to vary his methods according to the object.[34] Whether he was opposing the act of a Government, or giving his opinion of Gladstone, or objecting to the insistent advertisements of what he held to be a debased *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, or denouncing the project of a National Theatre, or speaking his mind about Mr. Pinero or Mr. Jones or Mr. Edmund Gosse or the Omar Khayyám Club, he modulated his thunders according to the tree, shrub, or weed to be blasted.[35] Nor did he ever hold too long to one topic. There would be a sudden transition to something else: a book of travels that he liked, or French wines and cookery.[36] And what excites my particular admiration is the skill of these transitions. It looks artless; as if he had exhausted the subject for the moment, and had turned quite at random to another. But I have for some months been going slowly through these "Musings," with a view to making an anthology, primarily of those paragraphs which are concerned with literature and art.[37] It has been like trying to carve a bird with flexible bones but no joints; you remove one paragraph from a monthly "Musing," a paragraph apparently self-contained, and unrelated to what precedes and to what follows, and something has gone out of it. The anthology will be made, but it will, I fear, have the same relation to the month's "Musing" that a falcon skilfully stuffed in the attitude of flight has to the living flash or swoop through the air. It is because the "Musings" were methodically "without method" that they were so living. Whibley followed faithfully and easily the movement of his own mind; he did not, as I and most people do, have to think up half a dozen subjects to talk about and then shuffle them into the most suitable order; the transition from one subject to the next suggested itself.[38†] Critics sometimes comment upon the sudden transitions and juxtapositions of modern poetry; that is, when right and successful, an application of somewhat the same method without method. Whether the transition is cogent or not, is merely a question of whether the mind is *serré* or *délié*,[39] whether the whole personality is involved; and certainly, the whole personality of Whibley is present in whatever he wrote, and it is the unity of a personality which gives an indissoluble unity to his variety of subject.

In attaining such unity, and indeed in attaining a *living* style, whether in prose or in verse, the practice of conversation is invaluable. Indeed, I believe that to write well it is necessary to converse a great deal. I say "converse" instead of "talk"; because I believe that there are two types of good writers: those who talk a great deal to others, and those, perhaps less fortunate, who talk a great deal to themselves. It is two thousand and hundreds of years since, that the theory was propounded that thought is conversation with oneself; all literary creation certainly springs either from the habit of talking to oneself or from the habit of talking to others. Most people are unable to do either, and that is why they lead such active lives. But anyone who would write must let himself go, in one way or the other, for there are only four ways of thinking: to talk to others, or to one other, or to talk to oneself, or to talk to God.

Whibley had another quality, not unrelated to the preceding, which is essential for the literary critic. The first requisite of literary criticism, as of every other literary or artistic activity, is that it shall be interesting. And the first condition of being interesting is to have the tact to choose only those subjects in which one is really interested, those which are germane to one's own temper. Universality of knowledge is a less chimerical ideal than universality of taste; but there is a kind of saturation in the text of an author, more important than erudition. Whibley had this discretion, that of the *honnête homme*[40] as critic, to select subjects suited to his own temperament. Learning he had and scholarship. He was a good Grecian, and no Hellenist. His standards of classical scholarship were acquired from such devoted scholars as R. A. Neil, but having acquired them he wore them easily.[41] He did not, like some more pretentious and pontifical critics, occupy himself with reviewing and bluepencilling literary reputations already well established, or adding one more superfluous essay to the bibliography of some already over-criticized author. In consequence, he has added to English criticism a number of essays on subjects which have never been so well handled (if handled at all) in the past, and to his treatment of which there will be little to add in the future; and has thereby made a secure place for himself in criticism.

I have said earlier that he took a particular delight in men of letters who were gentlemen or ragamuffins; perhaps his greatest enjoyment and amusement was in men of letters who were something of both. His appreciation of Sir Thomas Urquhart, Christianus Presbyteromastix, descended from Adam the Protoplast, with his *Ekskubalauron* and his *Logopandekteison*, as well as his great translation of Rabelais, is the best possible introduction to that author.[42] As in politics Whibley saw theory through men, so in literature he was at his best, and indeed most just in his criticism, when the author of an admired work was also a man after his own heart. Another essay which shows this delight in personality, even to the point of conjecture, is his essay on Petronius. Who else would have thought to remark of the author of the *Satyricon* that he "was a great gentleman?" but the phrase, as used here by Whibley, has its proper significance. It is not, however, true that he often distorted the literary value because of his enjoyment of the author's personality; he is able to say truly that "Petronius is as secret as Shakespeare, as impersonal as Flaubert." On the other hand, he is able to appreciate the book even when one feels that he has some dislike of the author, as with Laurence Sterne. And in the essay on Petronius his amused and catholic delight in what he called "the underworld of letters" is as well expressed as anywhere.

> You may meet Encolpius to-day (he says) without surprise or misunderstanding. He haunts the bars of the Strand, or hides him in the dismal alleys of Gray's Inn Road. One there was (one of how many!) who after a brilliant career at the University, found the highway his natural home, and forthwith deserted the groves of learning for the common hedgerow of adventure. The race-course knew him, and the pavement of London; blacklegs and touts were his chosen companions; now and again he would appear among his old associates, and enjoy a taste of Trimalchio's banquet, complaining the while that the money spent on his appetite might have been better employed in the backing of horses. Though long since he forgot he was a gentleman, he always remembered that he was a scholar, and, despite his drunken blackguardism, he still took refuge in Horace from the grime and squalor of his favourite career. Not long since he was discovered in a cellar, hungry and dishevelled; a tallow candle crammed into a beer-bottle was his only light; yet so reckless was his irresponsibility that he forgot his pinched belly and his ragged coat, and sat on the stone floor, reciting Virgil to another of his profession. Thus, if you doubt the essential truth of Petronius, you may see his grim comedy enacted every day. . . .[43]

I would not give the impression, however, that Whibley's service to letters was simply to fish up from the bottom of the past its forgotten and outmoded cranks and whimsies, any more than it was to descant amusingly upon greater and well-known writers. His peculiar merit as a critic, I think, resided in the combination of this personal gusto and curiosity, with a faculty of just literary appreciation. If he talked of Lucian or Herondas otherwise than professors do, he did not see them out of scale with the greatest masterpieces of Greek literature, nor did he merely bring forth a pleasant chat.[44] He was not a bookish critic in the style of James Russell Lowell.[45] And if he talked of the minor writers and journalists of the sixteenth and seventeenth century, with whom he had so much sympathy and for whom he had so much charity, it was never to elevate them above their proper place. The history of literature, he might have said, is always being simplified into a Hall of Fame of dusty noble statues and a list of names such as are used for decorating the domes of libraries. But the *honnête homme* in literary appreciation cannot be satisfied to worship a few mummified reputations; he must have the imagination and the heart to desire to feel literature as something alive; and we can touch the life of the great works of literature of any age all the better if we know something of the less.

As I said before, Whibley had what is perhaps the first of all critical gifts, without which others are vain: the ability to detect the living style from the dead. (And I may interject parenthetically, that though he never criticized in print any of the writers of my own generation, I found in conversation that he was able to recognize vitality even in writers with whom he had little sympathy.) It is largely owing to his insight and enthusiasm, as well as to his editorial toil, that the Tudor Translators have become recognized as they deserve.[46] In his appreciation of these humble workmen and great prose writers, he shows the recognition of the life, not merely of men, but of speech, as expressed in a note which he wrote many years ago on Henry Bradley's *The Making of English* (*Blackwood's*, Aug. 1904, 280):

> He, therefore, is the finest master of style who never loses hold of the past, who feels, what he can only express to minds as knowing as his own, that the words of his choice have each its own pedigree and its own life. Nor will he limit himself either to Saxon or to Latin. He will use the full resources of his speech with a justified pride, remembering that our language has as many colonies as our King, and that in this one respect at least we are the resolute conquerors of the world.[47]

It is in such ways as I have indicated, not aspiring to any literary dictatorship or pontificate, or to academic or extra-academic honours, and never caring to express his mind except on what really interested him or excited his admiration or indignation, that Charles Whibley made and holds his place in literary criticism. He was too modest, and had too varied tastes and interests in life, to care to be the monumental critic; and indeed, the monumental and encyclopaedic critic is to be regarded with a carefully appraising eye; for the monument is sometimes constructed either by indifference to literature or by indifference to life. Criticism, certainly, was only a part of his activity in life; and in being only a part, it is genuine in its kind. I had no intention in this paper to estimate his place in the tradition social and political which is represented by his connexion with W. E. Henley and his early labours on the *Scots Observer* and the *National Observer*; that is the subject-matter of other chapters; I allude to them merely as a reminder of the place of his literary essays in his work.[48]

There is a passage in one of his "Musings without Method," celebrating the late Professor York Powell of Oxford.[49] (*Blackwood's*, June 1904, 860 ff.) which I may be permitted to transcribe with suitable excisions and slight alteration, as applicable by analogy to its author:

> There was nothing that had happened in the past which was not of living interest to him. No man of his time had a deeper acquaintance with life, literature, and policy. . . . He was, for instance, the first or second expert (for he had a rival) in the history of the Prize Ring. We remember once that, the art of pantomime being mentioned in his presence, he was ready with a complete biography of Deburau, together with an account of the pantomimes which Gautier and Charles Nodier wrote for him.[50] This is but a single instance, taken at random, of his multifarious knowledge. . . . His knowledge of literature outstripped the common boundaries of this country or that . . . but his chief interest was perhaps in the French poetry of the newest school. He spoke French and understood it with an ease and a skill that is given to few Englishmen. . . . Like the late W. E. Henley, with whom he had many points of . . . sympathy, he was a keen upholder of some oppressed citizens, and at the same time a sturdy Jingo,[51] where the interests of England were involved. . . . While the egoism of most men inspires them to the composition of a work which shall make them for ever famous, (he) lavished his gifts in talk, and made his friend a sharer, as it were, in his own talent. In conversation no subject came amiss to him, because he was familiar with all; but he was so richly endowed with humour that he regarded nothing with an over-serious eye . . . The result is that, while his contemporaries will do full justice to his temperament and omniscience, he may appear to posterity, which knew him not, as far less than he really was. . . . But he has lived his life; he has scattered his wealth of learning with a generous hand; he has bequeathed a memory of affection to all who knew him; he has set his mark on works of younger men . . . And who shall say that this achievement is not greater than half a dozen volumes in octavo?[52]

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally published as *Charles Whibley: A Memoir* (London: Oxford UP, 1931). Pp. 13, "English Association Pamphlet, No. 80." An earlier version of this essay was delivered as a lecture to the English Association in the Westminster School Hall on 20 Feb 1931; it was reported in the *Times* on 21 Feb as "Literary Journalism / An Appreciation of Charles Whibley" (9).

2. TSE's friendship with Whibley developed after the launch of the *Criterion* in 1922, for which he offered advice and financial support. On 18 Oct 1924, TSE informed Herbert Read that "For Whibley I have a warm personal friendship: we have much in common" (*L2* 515). In 1925, Whibley recommended TSE to the publisher Geoffrey Faber on the launch of Faber & Gwyer. For TSE's obituary note of Whibley, see "In Memoriam" (1930) (4.94).

3. TSE refers to Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88). On 9 Apr 1926, TSE told Richard Aldington that "I find that a chapter of Gibbon acts on me like a very powerful drug" (*L3* 130).

4†. In *Charles Whibley: A Memoir* (hereafter *CW*): "of course"

5†. In *CW*: "twenty"

6. In *The Drapier's Letters* (1724 and 1735), Swift published a series of pamphlets in the character of an honest Dublin draper, M. P. Drapier, outraged by William Wood's methods of obtaining a license to supply Ireland with copper coins ("Wood's half-pence"). On 25? Aug 1927, TSE expressed to Geoffrey Faber his admiration for *Gulliver's Travels* (1726), saying "indeed *Gulliver*, and especially the last chapter of the Houhynyms, is to me with *King Lear* . . . one of the most tragic things ever written," and inquiring "Do you know the *Drapier's Letters* well? They are magnificent" (*L3* 659-60). Whibley chose Swift as the subject of his Leslie Stephen lecture (1917) at Cambridge, later collected in his *Literary Essays* (1919), which TSE reviewed (2.176). In "An Extempore Exhumation" (1928), TSE observed of Shane Leslie's study of Swift: "the short studies of Thackeray and Mr. Charles Whibley, both biased and from opposite points of view, are . . . more illuminating than Mr. Leslie's book" (3.468).

7. Defoe's best-known novels, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) and *Moll Flanders* (1722). On 15 Dec 1929, TSE thanked E. McKnight Kauffer for sending him a copy of the 1929 Haslewood Books edition of *Robinson Crusoe*. He praised Kauffer's illustrations, adding: "I have dipped into the book itself, for the first time since childhood. What a good tale it is!" (*L4* 714). TSE possessed a copy of Boswell's *The Life of Samuel Johnson* (1791).

8. Prime Minister Gladstone agreed with R. W. Church's account of Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism, which was examined in "The Catastrophe," chapter 19 of *The Oxford Movement: Twelve Years 1833-1845* (1891).

9. The anonymous Martin Marprelate tracts (1588-89) satirically attacked the Anglican Episcopacy from a Puritan point of view. In his review of Whibley's *Literary Studies* (1919) (2:177), TSE notes that the Martin Marprelate tracts "are still worth reading," and he discusses them at greater length in his 1929 BBC broadcast "The Elizabethan Grub Street" (3.635).

10†. In *CW*: "those few"

11. In a letter to Desmond MacCarthy of 14 Nov 1947, TSE confessed that he had not read all of Spenser's *The Faerie Queene*.

12. Whibley wrote an anonymous monthly commentary "Musings without Method" for *Blackwood's Magazine* from Feb 1900 until Dec 1929. Whibley's two-volume biography of the Conservative politician John James Robert Manners, seventh Duke of Rutland (1818-1906), was published by Blackwood in 1925.

13†. In *CW*: "small fine"

14. *ratures*: "erasures"; On 18 Jan 1923, TSE warned Richard Cobden-Sanderson, publisher of the *Criterion*, about Whibley's fine handwriting: "I hope the printers won't balk at Charles Whibley's writing" (*L2* 14).

15. George Savile, first Marquess of Halifax (1633-95), who had his followers figuratively trim their sails to prevailing political winds, in his pamphlet *The Character of a Trimmer* (1688).

16. The politician Charles James Fox was a notorious gambler who lost huge sums at the card game faro or Pharo. In *Political Portraits*, Whibley described this gambling addiction as the "worst blot upon the private character of Fox" (London: Macmillan, 1917), 136.

17. "The Trimmer," *Political Portraits: Second Series* (London: Macmillan, 1923), 239.

18. In his essay on Edward Hyde, Earl of Clarendon, Whibley characterizes Clarendon as a "faithful public servant, a sound Tory, the vivid painter of a vivid age" (*Political Portraits*, 66).

19. ragamuffin (OED): "A person (originally and chiefly a man or boy) of a ragged, dirty, and (frequently) disreputable appearance." In "An Underworld of Letters," Whibley described his fascination with "lettered vagabonds." *Literary Studies* (London: Macmillan, 1919), 298.

20. Whibley contributed an essay on Bolingbroke to the *Criterion*, 1 (Apr and July 1923, 203-16, 348-62) in which he asserted: "For expression too he had a natural aptitude. He was born with a gift for writing, and he had sedulously cultivated his gift" (352).

21. On 10 May 1935, TSE wrote to William King regarding the Conservative politician George Smythe, seventh Viscount Strangford (1818-57), observing that "There is a good deal about him in Whibley's *Lord John Manners and his Friends*. According to Whibley, Smythe and Manners, but especially Smythe, were the authors of ideas subsequently exploited by Disraeli."

22. On 18 Apr 1931, TSE wrote to A. L. Rowse to say that "I don't know anything about politics, except ecclesiastical politics; all I do is to ask questions, and try to stick pins into people who I know write bad prose, like Winston Churchill and Macdonald" (*L5* 554). Winston Churchill was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1953. Whibley was a vehement critic of Lloyd George, Churchill, and MacDonald in his "Musings without Method" column.

23. For TSE's reflections on "conversational style," see "Dryden the Poet" (1931) (4.268).

24. Henry James dictated his later novels to Theodora Bosanquet, his secretary from 1907 until his death in 1916.

25†. In *CW*: "'thought'"

26. TSE refers to Molly Bloom's unpunctuated "stream of consciousness" monologue at the end of Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).

27. TSE shared this opinion with his friend Bonamy Dobrée, who makes the same claim in *Modern Prose Style* (1934).

28. On 18 Dec 1926, the *Nation and Athenaeum* published his ironic reference to the eminent Shakespearean scholars A. W. Pollard and John Dover Wilson (both of whom TSE respected) as "insignificant insects" (2:874). Disraeli is reported to have said of the Prime Minister Lord John Russell: "If a traveller were informed that such a man was Leader of the House of Commons, he may well begin to comprehend how the Egyptians came to worship an insect." This insult is attributed to Disraeli and was not published as an open letter. For TSE's description of Cecil Beaton as an "insignificant . . . insect," see 4.211.

29. Whibley became acquainted with Daudet during his period of residence in Paris 1894-97. In a 1927 book report on Daudet's *Le Stupide XIXe Siècle*, TSE refers to Whibley as a "very old friend of Daudet" and recommends that if Faber decide to publish the book it should contain a preface by Whibley. An English translation of Daudet's book, *The Stupid XIXth Century*, was published in New York in 1928.

30. In 1923, TSE commissioned an essay on Maurras from Whibley. It did not appear.

31. The World League for Sexual Reform (WLSR), advocating sexual equality, was created in 1928 and held an International Congress at Wigmore Hall in London 1929.

32. "To the Memory of Mr. Oldham" (1684), line 6.

33. In fact, Whibley's "Musings without Method" appeared in 347 out of 360 issues of *Blackwood's* in the thirty years from Feb 1900: it failed to appear in Aug 1900, Aug 1903, Aug 1906, Mar 1921, Apr 1926, Apr and May 1928, Apr-Aug 1929. From Jan-Mar 1930, Whibley was incapacitated by acute neuralgia.

34. TSE serialized sections from Wyndham Lewis's satirical attack on literary London, *The Apes of God* (1930), in the *Criterion*. TSE alludes to the fact that Lewis had been in the artillery during World War I.

35. On 15 Feb 1926, TSE politely declined an invitation from Humbert Wolfe to attend the Omar Khayyám Club (*L3* 76).

36. On 12 Sept 1927, TSE wrote to Whibley to commend his comments in his latest "Musings without Method" in *Blackwood's Magazine* on "America, and about the Conservative Party, and about French wine" (*L3* 698).

37. On 7 July 1930, TSE informed F. S. Oliver in a letter that "I have (in confidence) taken upon myself the task of trying to make a volume (possibly more, but I doubt it) of selections from 'Musings without Method.' It is proving rather difficult." The volume did not appear. On 3 Dec 1945, TSE explained in response to John Squire's inquiry: "I never carried out my design of anthologising the *Musings without Method*, and indeed, I think I said in my essay that this most admirable journalism lost a good deal of its vigour in the process of being preserved in this way. But the entire file of *Blackwood* to which he contributed for so many years, is worth your attention and I should think that you might find the files of *Blackwood* in a Toronto library."

38†. In *CW*: "was given by his own mind"

39. *serré*: "closed, rigid"; *délié*: "sharp, subtle"

40. *Trans*: "well-bred gentleman"

41. Whibley took a first in the Cambridge Classical tripos in 1883 where he was taught by R. A. Neil (1852-1901), Fellow of Pembroke College, Cambridge, expert in ancient Greek, Sanskrit and Pali texts.

42. TSE refers to Whibley's introduction to Rabelais's *Gargantua and Pantagruel. Translated into English by Sir T. Urquhart and P. le Motteux, annis 1653-1694* published in three volumes in 1900 in the "Tudor Translations" series. In "The Local Flavour" (1919), TSE comments that Whibley's edition of "Urquhart's *Rabelais* contains all the irrelevant information about the writer which is what is wanted to stimulate a taste for him" (2:176). Following Whibley's death in 1930, TSE sought to secure publication of original manuscripts of notes and aphorisms by Sir Thomas Urquhart that had been in Whibley's possession.

43. *Studies in Frankness* (London: Constable, 1910), 38-39. Whibley's essays on Sterne, Lucian, and Herondas also appear in this collection.

44. In "The Golden Ass of Apuleius" (1928), TSE remarks of Whibley's introduction to a new edition of an Elizabethan translation that "No one is at all so well qualified to write of certain late Latin and Greek writers – Apuleius, Petronius, Lucian, and Herondas for example – as Mr Whibley; and no one has written of them so well. Mr Whibley is a scholar, a critic, and a man of the world; and one must be all of these to write well of these authors" (3.485).

45. In "American Critics" (1929), TSE refers to "the fireside criticism of men like James Russell Lowell" (3.569).

46. Whibley wrote several introductions for W. E. Henley's "The Tudor Translations" series in the 1890s, and after Henley's death he edited a second series. In 1927, TSE wrote an introduction to *Seneca his Tenne Tragedies* in this series (reprinted as "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation") written at Whibley's invitation (3.195).

47. "Musings without Method," *Blackwood's Magazine*, 176 (Aug 1904), 280. For TSE's praise of the philologist Bradley, see "Wanley and Chapman" (1925) (2:603).

48. From 1889 to 1893, Whibley assisted Henley in editing the *Scots Observer* and later the *National Observer*.

49. Frederick York Powell (1850-1904), Regius Professor of Modern History at Oxford University from 1894 until his death.

50. Jean-Gaspard Deburau (1796-1846), born Jan Kašpar Dvořák, was a Bohemian-French mime artist, praised by the French writers Gautier and Nodier.

51. Jingo (OED): "A nickname for those who supported and lauded the policy of Lord Beaconsfield in sending a British fleet into Turkish waters to resist the advance of Russia in 1878; hence, one who brags of his country's preparedness for fight, and generally advocates or favours a bellicose policy in dealing with foreign powers; a blustering or blatant 'patriot'; a Chauvinist"

52. "Musings without Method," *Blackwood's Magazine*, 175 (June 1904), 861-62.

B.B.C. Talks on Fiction

The Change of Policy. To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (22 Dec 1931) 6

Sir,—We desire to express our profound regret at the change of policy implied in the recent decision of the B.B.C. to exclude all references to contemporary novels from broadcast talks. Many of the signatories to this letter are engaged in the creation, manufacture, distribution, and criticism of books. Some of us are, therefore, directly affected by this ban, and to that extent may be said to be prejudiced. But we base our protest on a reasoned view of the place which contemporary literature should hold in the national life, and of the place which the art of fiction holds in literature.

We do not need to argue what no one will dispute – namely, that nothing is of greater value to a nation than its literature. It is, however, too often forgotten that the value of a literature depends on the extent to which it is a living growth, maintained by a wide and intelligent popular interest. Only those professionally engaged in literature realize how small a proportion of the population of Great Britain has that interest or how far this country is behind many other countries in this regard.

There are three ways in which a popular interest in books can be stimulated – by the Press, by educational institutions, and by the B.B.C. Mr. Alfred Noyes thinks that it can all be left to the Press. “Let the written word,” he says, “take care of the written word.”[1] But the newspapers which the mass of the nation reads take a limited interest in books; and, even if they took more, those who do not read the written word are unlikely to read the written word about the written word. There is a virtue about the spoken word, heard in almost every home in the country, which gives the B.B.C. an incomparable opportunity for raising the standard of public intelligence. In this respect it is superior even to the schools, for the simple reason that none of its listeners is under any compulsion to listen.

The B.B.C. has hitherto shown itself so alive to the responsibilities which this opportunity carries with it, by the proportion of programme-time allotted to the criticism of books, as well as by its choice of critics, that its new decision must be taken as a seriously retrograde step. If there is any truth in our contention that an interest in contemporary literature ought to be encouraged by any possible means, how can fiction be left out? What would recent English literature have been without Scott, Dickens, Thackeray, George Eliot, Meredith, Stevenson, Hardy, and Arnold Bennett? The influence of these and of other novelists on the life and character of the last hundred years is incalculable. Yet, if the B.B.C. had been in existence while they were writing and had imposed then the ban which it has seen fit to impose now, no broadcast reference to any of their writings would have been permitted until long after they were safely dead and buried. By this new restriction and the scope of its talks the B.B.C. is deliberately placing itself in a position of inferiority to the newspapers, and refusing to literature the treatment which it gives to art and music.

It is not impossible that the B.B.C. may have been influenced by angry letters of protest from members of the public whose views do not happen to coincide with those of a particular wireless critic. Most authors, reviewers, and publishers have had similar experiences, and can sympathize with the authorities at Savoy Hill.[2] But the very fact that the B.B.C. has hitherto attached no more importance to such protests than they deserve, and has insisted on keeping open house for different views on religion, politics, and literature, has given it a unique position among similar institutions throughout the civilized world.

We understand that the action of the B.B.C. is due to the fact that critics have refused to accept the condition laid down that certain writers must never be referred to. If this is so, we must venture to suggest that such a condition ought never to have been imposed. That some limitations on broadcast speech are necessary no one will deny. But we are unable to see why these should be other than the ordinary limitations placed on public speaking by social usage and the law of the land. A censorship of books is a dangerous thing. A censorship of criticism is surely more dangerous still.

We have assumed in this letter that the ban is to be placed merely on fiction. According to Mr. Alfred Noyes it is to apply to "contemporary authors" in general. We do not know whether this is an authoritative statement. If it is, the situation is worse than we have suggested. But, even if the statement is at present inaccurate, we have every reason to fear that it will prove to be an intelligent anticipation, unless the new decision is, as we earnestly hope it will be, reversed.

We are, Sir, &c.,

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NOTES

1. In a letter to the *Times* of 14 Dec 1931, the poet, playwright, and novelist Alfred Noyes (1880-1958) wrote in opposition to Edith Lyttelton's letter of 11 Dec regarding the "general sense of uneasiness about the rumoured change of policy in the management of the B.B.C. talks, including the reviews of books and plays" (15). "The B.B.C," he concluded a lengthy argument, "can hardly come to a wiser decision that it has now taken – to return to its original policy, and to let the written word take care of the written word. The British public is quite well enough

informed to choose its own literature; or, at least, to find more adequate guides, with more time to spare than any wireless 'educator,' no matter how rosy and supposedly unsafe his opinions" (8).

2. The broadcasting studios of the BBC, under the first Director-General John Reith, were located in Savoy Hill from 1923 until 1932.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 11 (Jan 1932) 268-75

For the last few months we have been peppered with a succession of little books on financial and economic problems; little books aimed at that large part of the "reading public" which normally is not only ignorant of such matters, but prefers to remain so. I myself am normally ignorant as anybody, with the normal disinclination to take up any subject which I did not study in my youth. But the repeated impact of these small books upon the eye cannot fail to make an impression upon the conscience. Of old it seemed that the economists preferred to discuss their mysteries among themselves, and in two-volume works priced from fifteen to thirty shillings; and that was a happy age for the man who desired to know nothing of their subject. But now economists issue into the market-place to harangue and convert the people; they almost buttonhole you, by publishing these modest volumes which seem to say "it is now *your* duty to learn what's what in these deep matters; I am just the book to make it all clear even to your intelligence, written down exactly to your level; and the urgency is so great, that you cannot pretend that the price is beyond your means." But the conscience which forces us to read one, compels us to go on and read the rest; and in the end the voice of conscience seems to me almost a Siren voice, coaxing one to be fair-minded and "hear the other side." And there are not two sides, but a great many.

Having entered upon such a course of education, however, we can only go on; and from time to time draw up a balance of convictions and doubts. Among the literature of the subject which I have examined lately are *Can Governments Cure Unemployment?* by Sir Norman Angell and Harold Wright (Dent: 3s. 6d.); *Poverty in Plenty* by J. A. Hobson (Allen & Unwin: 2s. 6d.); *Money and Prices* by Augustus Baker (Dent: 6s.); and *This Unemployment* by the Rev. V. A. Demant (Student Christian Movement: 4s.). None of these books would, I believe, be considered quite orthodox, but they differ among themselves in kind and degree of unorthodoxy. Among these, Sir Norman Angell and Mr. Wright appear to be, if not wholly orthodox, at least, in the present state of affairs, the most conservative.[1] For the first conviction that the beginner acquires is that the troubles from which we suffer are very deep-seated indeed, and of very long heredity; and such opinions are held even by some who could not be called "mediaevalists."[2] We are not interested in anything that appears to promise merely temporary alleviation, however reasonable in themselves for the moment may be the measures suggested.

> The remedy which we suggest for this condition (say Sir Norman and Mr. Wright) is a governmental control of marketing operations; the adaptation and co-ordination of industry under the direction of the State; a National Plan, involving co-operation between a series of interlocking industries to supply the ascertainable needs of the community, scientific marketing, the education of the consumer by advertisement, and the better organization of labour.[3] [140]

Perhaps it is a phrase like "National Plan" which first arouses the suspicion of the ignoramus; but the whole sentence is as disappointing as the Mosley Plan or any of the nostrums of the moment offered by any of the politicians, whether in office or out.[4] We have seen so many Boards, Commissions and Conferences already; and the authors of this book seem to hope much from the "co-operation of Capitalism and Socialism," whilst we suspect that it is partly because of this "co-operation between Capitalism and Socialism" which has been going on for a generation, that we are in the present pass. Sir Norman Angell and Mr. Wright, one suspects sadly, are merely Mensheviks of the London School of Economics pattern.[5]

It is already a relief to turn to Mr. J. A. Hobson. For Mr. Hobson, whatever we may think of his proposals, writes with a warmth of feeling appropriate to the subject, and without which any writing on this subject is apt to appear complacent. I know the name of Mr. Hobson as the author of serious economic works; I have no knowledge of his standing in academic circles.[6] But I liked this book; and though it has a Fabian flavour, it seemed to have some of the virtue of solitary, rather than group thought.[7] No one would say that Mr. Hobson does not see the seriousness of the situation, and the profundity of the trouble. "My thesis is," says he, "that our main economic troubles are of a distinctively moral origin" [85]; and this is good; yet the beginner cannot help wondering whether his account of the relation of the moral to the economic malady is the right one. Thus he says "the workers as a whole are wronged by the economic forces which accord too large a share of the product to non-workers" [85]; and I cannot but feel that underlying this statement is the old fallacy of the absolute righteousness of *work*. It would seem to be more and more the fact that the workers are "wronged" (if that is the best word) by the economic forces which prevent the non-workers from consuming what the workers produce. And Mr. Hobson seems to me to hope for too much from a simple redistribution of the "money" in existence. He wastes several pages of indignation on monopolists of talent or reputation, such as cinema stars and eminent surgeons and barristers, who are "overpaid."[8] But does it really matter so much to the world at large whether a handful of people are overpaid or not? Does it matter, fundamentally, whether unskilled workers in some trades are better paid than the skilled workers in others? These are wrongs, certainly, for denouncing which we must have every sympathy with Mr. Hobson. He seems to me nearer the root of the matter when he says, in speaking of the "surpluses" of income accumulated by individuals or companies.

> Their low utility for purposes of consumption or enjoyment leads to their accumulation as savings for investment in excess of the requirements and possible uses of the economic system as a whole.[9] [54]

One might add that if these accumulations reached a point at which they could not be reinvested or lent, because the opportunities for expansion of businesses had come to an end, then they would cease to be money at all – or so it would seem. But is not the real moral error the general assumption that money is most virtuously used when it is used "profitably" – to produce more money? We consider it virtuous to work – to work full time (whatever that may be); and we consider virtuous, and load with honours, the man who builds up a business which gives work to a great number of men; and such an employer is admired as a benefactor whether the actual produce of his industry is or is not such as it is morally good for the public to have at all, or to have in such profusion. But when Mr. Hobson says that

> The consumer for whose enjoyments the whole of this economic system is supposed to have been created is unable to perform his necessary part of withdrawing goods from the productive system as fast as they can be produced. [75]

I think that I understand and agree with what he says. Yet is this failure, I wonder, merely due to an unjust *distribution* of money incomes? I do not suppose that Mr. Hobson *means* that there is a definite amount of money in the world, and that all we have to do is to reapportion it; for I suppose that such simple remedies are hardly hawked even in Hyde Park.[10] And I cannot willingly agree to the pessimism of one of his later remarks: "The conscious ordering of world industry and commerce as the organic whole it is, can alone serve to give peace, prosperity and progress to the economic life of the several parts of that organic whole" [81]. Certainly this is the desirable end, but it is not socialism or anything else in our time. Would it not be better at present for each people to concentrate attention on what it can do at home?

The avenue from which Fr. Demant approaches the social problem is sympathetic to me, which is probably why from time to time a ray of understanding seemed to penetrate the twilight of my mind.[11] I applaud, for instance, such a remark as:

> Christianity repudiates a position which allows an *economic system* to be a form of government, i.e., to determine what human desires should or should not be satisfied.[12] [140]

And his whole attitude toward the "unemployment" problem seems to me to be very near the truth; possibly because my knowledge is limited; but it is the only type of explanation of that problem which seems to me to explain at all.[13] For to me the unemployment problem seems to be one which we have had always with us. And here again, the ordinary attitude towards unemployment is vitiated by the moral error of "the dignity of labour."[14] Formerly the unemployed consisted largely of women, numbers of whom, at least above a certain social status, did very little "work" in the capitalist or socialist sense; there were also numbers of lightly employed domestics. During the earlier part of the capitalist era the unemployed consisted also of people living on the income from capital accumulated by their parents and grandparents; and it was the fashion for radical-minded persons who had to earn their livings to denounce such people as drones and parasites. That the *rentier* should disappear was considered natural justice; that women should earn their livings was hailed as a triumph for feminism – that they should "work" in the modern sense was an assertion of their dignity, of their moral equality with men; it was almost good enough evidence to convince a Moslem that women have souls.[15] The same moral prejudice which was once directed against women and *rentiers* is now transferred by many persons to the "unemployed." We hear often of the minor defects of the dole system; and if the dole system is to be continued I do not object to these defects being remedied, if possible. I believe that the great majority of unemployed men of the older generations, those who were brought up to a life occupied by work, genuinely prefer to work, would work if they could; and we have no reason for surprise if young men who have never had the opportunity to work or who have entered life on a dole scale of living, have no desire to work.[16] There is little difference between a young man brought up on the dole, and a young man brought up as a *rentier*; except that the latter, having had a better education, and larger means, has possibly been trained to a sense of responsibility and a knowledge of how to employ leisure. I do not suppose that most unemployed workmen know how, or are able, to make the best use of their leisure; but it seems to me that an unemployed man who wants "work" is justified only for one of two reasons: (1) he desires to keep himself and his family more decently than he can on his weekly allowance, to give himself and them more advantages of comfort, education, recreation; or (2) he is aware of his miserable inability to fill his time unless he is working to make money for himself or an employer. I should think better of communism if I learned that there existed in Russia a decent leisure class; but when the defenders of Bolshevism tell us that Russia is a beehive of industrial activity, I am only the more convinced, with Mr. Hobson, that the Soviet system is simply the culmination of capitalism.[17]

The pleasant feeling that I was able to understand parts of *This Unemployment* was enhanced by finding that Fr. Demant made criticisms of Mr. Hobson's book which were pertinent to the doubts which Mr. Hobson had raised in my own mind.[18] And, as I may have suggested above, the thought had already occurred to me, that "work for all," in the industrial sense of the word "work," would never again be possible in human history so long as there exist the natural resources for making and using machinery. The unemployment can only disappear, it seems, when mankind returns to a condition of barbarism, and this it is hardly likely to do of its own accord. But meanwhile, what are we to do with people, even if we have the most efficient "credit-reform?" This is the question which Fr. Demant does not seem quite to get round to answering; nor, for my purposes, does Mr. Baker.[19] I say for my purposes, because *Money and Prices* is a piece of more abstruse credit reform argument; and like the late F. H. Bradley, I have no capacity for the abstruse.[20] The answer may be there, for the book is impressive and persuasive enough, and I mean to read it again; but the answer so far I have simply failed to find. I still believe that such words as *work* and *thrift* have potent moral significance, though their real moral value has been distorted by the capitalist system, a distortion which seems unlikely to be straightened out in any merely socialist system.[21] *Property* is another such word. As for work, I find for myself that I am glad to be able to earn the greater part of my income by my personal exertions, rather than depend entirely on a dole either from my parents or the State. I prefer also a condition of affairs in which I have a daily routine of work or business the greater part of which for the greater part of the time I find boring. I am aware that if my work were as monotonous as that of an unskilled labourer in a mass-production factory, I should feel otherwise. But a certain amount of routine, of dullness and of necessity seems inseparable from work; and for myself, I am too sceptical of my own abilities to be able to make a whole-time job of writing poetry, even if I had the means.[22] Such dependence upon work may certainly be due to some defect of character or vitality; but if so I imagine that it is a defect from which a large part of humanity suffers. And supposing that the attempt were made to solve the problem of work (for after all there will always be *some* work to be done) by shortening hours to make the work go round? You cannot subdivide labour-time to infinitesimals, and long before you reached infinitesimals you would find that the shortness of the individual's working time hampered efficiency as much as a reversion to primitive methods; and no one would be able to think of his work as anything but an irritating and unnecessary interruption of his leisure.[23]

So that humanity would be called upon (if it is worthwhile "calling upon" humanity to do anything) to invent new and I hope pleasant kinds of work beyond what is recognized at present as productive labour; indeed, to civilize itself much more. It would not matter whether you called this new work by the name of work or play. A professional football player, for instance, seems to me to be engaged in useful work. But the people cannot spend all their time watching football matches, bathing in the Serpentine, visiting cinemas, listening to educative wireless talks, playing the gramophone, motoring, or reading profound philosophical works.[24] The man who watches the football match needs to be able to feel as *useful* as the footballer. If the various parts of football audiences were themselves engaged, for a reasonable part of their time, in reciprocally entertaining the football players and each other for a similar cash consideration, that I should call a fair division of labour. I say "for a reasonable part of their time," because I think that under the present system the majority of those who have work at all, have to work too long or too hard. If, for instance, my position is such that I can only afford one servant, and accordingly must find a very strong and hardworking servant who will do all the work I require, that may be in the circumstances commendable thrift – in view of other responsibilities which I may have for my spare cash. But I do not like the situation; and I should prefer to employ a large staff of servants, each doing much lighter work but profiting by the benefits of the cultured and devout atmosphere of the home in which they lived. That aspiration, as it stands, is no doubt "mediaevalism"; but we want a modern equivalent for such a paradise.

These problems seem to me so serious that it is worthwhile even for the simpleton to explore them; for it is possible that his blunderings may be of some help to the simplicity of others: people often avoid thinking about matters because they are afraid of making fools of themselves; but if they see another person ready to run the risk of looking foolish, they may take heart. Likewise, the feeble stutterings of the questioner may assist the expert to explain himself more clearly still.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. Sir Ralph Norman Angell (1872-1967), peace campaigner and journalist, was awarded a knighthood in 1931 for his articles and books on the causes of war, including the best seller *The Great Illusion* (1910). He was a Labour Party MP but stood down from parliament in the general election of 1931. The Liberal economist Harold Wright (1883-1934), Fellow, Pembroke College, Cambridge, was the editor of the *Nation* from 1930 until it was amalgamated with the *New Statesman* in 1931.

2. On a visit to London in July 1931, the Russian economic theorist Nikolai Bukharin diagnosed the problem of contemporary bourgeois materialist society as a "new medievalism." "Theory and Practice from the Standpoint of Dialectical Materialism," *Science at the Crossroads: Papers Presented to the International Congress of the History of Science and Technology Held in London from June 29th to July 3rd, 1931 by the Delegates of the U.S.S.R* (London: Kniga, 1931), 23.

3. Norman Angell and Harold Wright, *Can Governments Cure Unemployment?* (London: Dent, 1931); the title responds to David Lloyd George's 1929 election slogan "We can conquer unemployment!"

4. TSE discusses the radical economic proposals contained in Oswald Mosley's manifesto *A National Policy* (1931) in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1931 (4.254).

5. Angell and Wright attempt "to find out to what extent and in what manner a Socialist Government which does not believe in Capitalism may work cordially with a Capitalist industry that does not believe in Socialism" (13). They refer to "Socialist-Capitalist co-operation" (44) and "the co-operation, that is, of a Socialist Government with Capitalist organisations" (69).

Menshevik (OED): "A member of a moderate faction of the Russian Social Democratic Workers' Party which in 1903 split from the Bolsheviks (led by Lenin); a Socialist who favoured cooperation with liberal politicians in the Russian Revolution of 1905." The London School of

Economics (LSE) was founded in 1895 by the Fabian Socialists Beatrice and Sidney Webb. In 1932, economists at the LSE were engaged in a fierce debate with the Cambridge supporters of Keynes over the economic solution to the Great Depression.

6. TSE reviewed J. A. Hobson's *The Conditions of Industrial Peace* sympathetically in the *Criterion* for July 1927 (3.139-40). Hobson's economic theories were widely considered to be unorthodox in academic circles. His autobiography was entitled *Confessions of an Economic Heretic* (1938).

7. Hobson was an architect of "New Liberalism" which conceived of society as an organism comprised of interdependent individuals. TSE distinguishes it from the collectivism of Fabianism, which he criticizes in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1931 (4.305).

8. Hobson complains: "The man who can make millions by an astute business deal, the surgeon who can rack-rent wealthy patients for an operation, the film star who can get his £1,000 a week upon a contract – does the fact that such payments can be extorted imply that they are necessary incentives to the performance of this skilled work?" (50-51).

9. J. A. Hobson, *Poverty in Plenty: The Ethics of Income* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1931).

10. TSE refers to Speakers' Corner in London's Hyde Park, where socialists were regular speakers. In "The Function of Criticism" (1923), TSE worried that literary critics were in danger of becoming "no better than a Sunday park of contending and contentious orators, who have not even arrived at the articulation of their differences" (2:459).

11. Anglo-Catholic priest Canon V. A. Demant (1893-1983), Director of Research at the Christian Social Council, founded the journal *Christendom* with Maurice Reckitt in 1931. On 20 Oct 1931, TSE wrote to Demant to say "I am very much interested in your work" and to arrange a meeting (*L5* 698). On 23 Jan 1932, TSE invited Demant, a supporter of C. H. Douglas's economic theory of Social Credit, to review Douglas's *The Monopoly of Credit* (1931) for the *Criterion*. TSE reviewed Demant's contribution to *Coal: A Challenge to the National Conscience* (1927) in the *Criterion* for July 1927, praising the collection as "a book which everyone ought to read, for its insistence that economics and politics, in their most exact sense, deserve the attention of people who believe in the spiritual askesis and the discipline and development of the soul" (3.140-41).

12. V. A. Demant, *This Unemployment: Disaster or Opportunity?* (London: Student Christian Movement Press, 1931).

13. In a letter of 3 Feb 1932, TSE informed J. H. Oldham that Demant's "book on Unemployment struck me as very good so far as it goes." In *This Unemployment*, Demant absolves individuals from blame for their unemployment and argues for credit reform along the lines of Douglas's theory of Social Credit.

14. The phrase was a popular Victorian rallying cry for social reform used, for example, in the title of a published lecture given by Cardinal Manning, *The Dignity and Rights of Labour*, in Leeds in 1874.

15. rentier (OED): "A person who derives his or her income from property or investment"; OED cites R. H. Tawney's derogatory use of the term "class of *rentier*" in his critique of capitalism *The Acquisitive Society* (1921). TSE repeats a widespread misconception that in Islam women have no souls.

16. TSE refers to contemporary public debate over the reform of unemployment benefits (commonly known as the "dole") first instituted in the United Kingdom in the National Insurance Act of 1911.

17. Hobson asserts: "The present Soviet economic system is none the less 'capitalist' in method because the State assumes the role of capitalist" (80).

18. Demant criticizes Hobson's suggestion that the solution to unemployment is to redistribute wealth through taxation: "The inequality of income, of which the creditor-debtor relationship is the most socially harmful, is a result of a more fundamental defect, and by setting this aside Mr Hobson has given us an analysis which fails to explain how industry is to be financed in a way which is not open to the defects he has done so much to expose" (111).

19. Economist Augustus Baker (1903-66) states in *Money and Prices* (London: Dent, 1931), "the proposals advanced in this book took shape in the course of an attempt to understand and interpret Major Douglas's, and resemble them in requiring prices to be directly controlled" (197).

20. In "Francis Herbert Bradley" (1927), TSE mentions "Bradley's polemical irony and his obvious zest in using it, his habit of discomfiting an opponent with a sudden confession of ignorance, of inability to understand, or of incapacity for abstruse thought" (3.304).

21. In his chapter entitled "The Problem of Thrift" Baker concludes: "The problem with which society is faced is clearly not a problem of production but one of distribution, and no amount of thrift will solve it" (126).

22. In his closing Charles Eliot Norton lecture (1933), TSE remarks: "poetry is not a career, but a mug's game" (4.691).

23. In "If I Were a Dean" (1931), TSE stipulates: "And lastly, I should want, for myself, a little more leisure still" (4.298).

24. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1931, TSE refers facetiously to the swimming pool on the Serpentine in Hyde Park, known as "Lansbury's Lido" after George Lansbury, the Labour government cabinet minister who commissioned it (4.142).

George Herbert[1]

The Spectator, 148 (12 Mar 1932) 360-61

In *The Oxford Book of English Verse*, George Herbert is allotted five pages, the same number as Bishop King and many less than Robert Herrick.[2] This does, I imagine, gauge pretty accurately the measure of Herbert's reputation: he is known as the author of a few fine devotional poems suitable for anthologies, which serve to illustrate his debt to Donne; and his figure is preserved, chiefly by Walton's Life, as one of genuine though rather conventional piety.[3] For poetic range he is compared unfavourably with Donne, and for religious intensity he is compared unfavourably with Crashaw. This latter opinion, it may be suspected, is supported by those who choose to take a view of the Church of England into which a very temperate and "reasonable" kind of personal devoutness will best fit. The author of the Introduction to the little "World's Classics" edition seems to me representative of this attitude.[4] "The strength and support of that branch of the Catholic Church militant in our own country," he says, "has always lain upon the middle way; it has never been her method either to 'waste in passionate dreams,' or to protest overmuch with the voices of prophecy or denunciation." But he adds, with true British tolerance, "To say this is not to presume to depreciate the excellence of those kinds of enthusiasm which are congenitally foreign to the English character" [iii]. He completes his picture of the Church of England in the spirit of Tennysonian pastoral: "Here, as the cattle wind homeward in the evening light, the benign, white-haired parson stands at his gate to greet the cowherd, and the village chime calls the labourers to evensong" [iv].

In our time such a happy picture of a social fabric of moderate and complacent piety – a picture which at once idealizes society and travesties the Church – may provoke a smile; yet it does represent the false setting in which we still place the figure of George Herbert. We know little of his life, it is true; but what we do know, and the very much more that we know about his period, concur to demonstrate the falsity. Whatever Herbert was, he was not the prototype of the clergyman of Dickens' Christmas at Dingley Dell.[5] Walton's portrait is certainly formalized and starched, but probably true so far as it goes; suggesting, as it does, that he was not himself imaginative or spiritually minded enough to appreciate, though he could respect.

Of all the "metaphysical" poets, Herbert has suffered the most from being read only in anthologies. Even in Professor Grierson's admirable specialized anthology of metaphysical verse, he is at a disadvantage compared with several writers of less importance. The usual opinion, I believe, is as I have already said in other words, that we go to Donne for poetry and to Crashaw for religious poetry: but that Herbert deserves to be remembered as the representative lyrist of a mild and tepid Church.[6]

Yet, when we take Herbert's collected poems and read industriously through the volume we cannot help being astonished both at the considerable number of pieces which are as fine as those in any anthology, and at what we may call the spiritual stamina of the work. Throughout there is brain work, and a very high level of intensity; his poetry is definitely an *oeuvre*, to be studied entire.[7] And our gradual appreciation of the poetry gives us a new impression of the man.

All poetry is difficult, almost impossible, to write: and one of the great permanent causes of error in writing poetry is the difficulty of distinguishing between what one really feels and what one would like to feel, and between the moments of genuine feeling and the moments of falsity. This is a danger in all poetry: but it is a peculiarly grave danger in the writing of devotional verse. Above that level of attainment of the spiritual life, below which there is no desire to write religious verse, it becomes extremely difficult not to confuse accomplishment with intention, a condition at which one merely aims with the condition in which one actually lives, what one would be with what one is: and verse which represents only good intentions is worthless – on that plane, indeed, a betrayal. The greater the elevation, the finer becomes the difference between sincerity and insincerity, between the reality and the unattained aspiration.

And in this George Herbert seems to me to be as secure, as habitually sure, as any poet who has written in English. With the religious verse of Donne, as with that of Milton, one is aware of a prodigious mastery of the language employed upon religious subjects; with that of Crashaw, of a passionate fancy and a metrical ability which might also have employed themselves upon other than religious themes; and even with Gerard Hopkins, I find myself wondering whether there is an essential relation between his contribution to poetry and his religious vocation.[8] Of George Herbert, as of St. John of the Cross, I feel that no lower theme could have evoked his genius. This, no doubt, sounds like excessive praise; but I am not for a moment comparing the accomplishment of Herbert with that of the Spaniard. I am only putting forward the suggestion that it is very rare to find a poet of whom one may say, that his poetic gift would have remained dormant or unfulfilled but for his religious vocation. Crashaw (or so I believe) had he remained in the world, might still have been the great poet that he is; Herbert, had he remained in the world, would (I think) at most have produced a few elegant anthology pieces like those of Herbert of Cherbury. But you will not get much satisfaction from George Herbert unless you can take seriously the things which he took seriously himself and which made him what he was.

That age of violent religious dissensions, a time in which even the most retired clergyman might find himself called upon to suffer extremely for his faith, was an age of strong passions, including religious passions; in which those who, like the Herbert family, had the best opportunity of enjoying the pleasures and glories of this world were also sometimes the most aware of the other. Of all devotional poets, certainly of all Anglican poets, George Herbert seems nearest in feeling to Christina Rossetti – who indeed, in a humble way, found herself obliged to make as great, and perhaps a greater, sacrifice of this world than did Herbert. But a certain resemblance of temperament immediately suggests also profound differences. Christina's religious verse suffers, when we read much of it together, from a monotony due to a narrower range of emotion and an inferior intellectual gift. Herbert is an anatomist of feeling and a trained theologian too; his mind is working continually both on the mysteries of faith and the motives of the heart.[9]

> I know the ways of Learning; both the head
> And pipes that feed the press, and make it run . . .
>
> I know the ways of Honour, what maintains
> The quick returns of courtesy and wit . . .
>
> I know the ways of Pleasure, the sweet strains,
> The lullings and the relishings of it;
> The propositions of hot blood and brains . . .[10]

He knew all these various motions far better than Christina Rossetti did; and his poetry expresses the slow, sometimes almost despairing and always agonizing toil of the proud and passionate man of the world towards spiritual life; a toil and agony which must always be the same, for the similar temperament, to the end of the world. I never feel that the great Dean of St. Paul's, with his mastery of the spoken word, his success and applause to the end, quite conquered his natural pride of mind; Herbert, the vicar of Bemerton, in his shorter life went much farther on the road of humility.[11]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. On 30 Sept 1931, TSE replied to Evelyn Underhill, offering an article on George Herbert to the *Spectator* series "Studies in Sanctity" (*L5* 674), which would be launched on 23 Jan 1932 by Underhill's essay on "The Meaning of Sanctity." On 1 Mar, TSE wrote to Underhill: "I hope indeed that my note on Herbert is as satisfactory as you believe it is. I found it more difficult to write than I had anticipated in order to keep it from being merely a piece of literary criticism, and by emphasis on the human character." TSE's article, the eighth in the series, was prefaced by an editorial note announcing: "This article continues our series of studies of saintly characters who have in different ages and different manners exercised a transforming influence on the life of their day" (360). On 4 Feb 1948, TSE recalled to Geoffrey Curtis, "I don't know what became of my short note on George Herbert," adding, "I had even forgotten that I had printed anything on the subject in *The Spectator*. I am afraid I have never seen it since. It could only have been a very short note, and I no doubt dismissed it in the hope of eventually doing something more worthy of the subject."

2. *The Oxford Book of English Verse, 1250-1900* (1925), chosen and edited by Arthur Quiller-Couch, devotes twenty-one pages to Herrick.

3. Izaak Walton's 1670 *Life* placed great emphasis on Herbert's holiness and his diligent upholding of the practices of the Church of England: "Thus he liv'd, and thus he dy'd like a saint." *The Lives of John Donne, Sir Henry Wotton, Richard Hooker, George Herbert and Robert Sanderson* (London: Oxford UP, 1927, 319). In his 1930 BBC broadcast "The Devotional Poets of the Seventeenth Century," TSE observes: "Herbert gained the reputation of great saintliness; Izaak Walton, in his life of Mr. George Herbert, perhaps overdoes it" (4.75).

4. *The Poems of George Herbert*, ed. with an introduction by Arthur Waugh (London: Oxford UP, 1907).

5. In Dickens's *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1837), Dingley Dell is the manor farm owned by Mr. Wardle, where the Pickwickians enjoy convivial Christmas festivities.

6. In his introduction to *Metaphysical Lyrics and Poems of the Seventeenth Century*, Grierson observes that "there is no evidence in Herbert's most agitated verses of the deeper scars, the profounder remorse which gives such a passionate, anguished *timbre* to the harsh but resonant harmonies" of Donne's poetry, adding "Vaughan's quietist and mystical, Herbert's restrained and ordered, temper and poetry are equally remote from the radiant spirit of Crashaw" (*MLP*, xli, xlvi).

7. TSE accords Herbert the intellectual power of a metaphysical poet. In "A Note on Richard Crashaw" (1928), TSE says "There is brain work" in Crashaw's poem "The Tear" but "no brain work" in Shelley's "To a Skylark" (3.726).

8. TSE develops his reflections on the devotional qualities of the poetry of Jesuit priest Gerard Manley Hopkins (1844-89) in *ASG* (47-48).

9. In "Donne in Our Time" (1931), TSE suggests: "From one point of view, George Herbert is far more to the taste of an admirer of Christina Rossetti than necessarily to the taste of an admirer of Donne" (4.376)

10. From "The Pearl" (*The Poems of George Herbert*, 89); TSE modernizes the spelling of Waugh's edition.

11. Herbert was rector of Bemerton, near Salisbury, from Apr 1630 until his death in 1633; John Donne was installed as Dean of St. Paul's, London, in Nov 1621.

Preface to *Bubu of Montparnasse,* by Charles-Louis Philippe. Trans. Laurence Vail

Paris: Crosby Continental Editions, 1932. Pp. 218; Preface, vii-xiv[1]

It is a good many years ago, it was in the year 1910, that I first read *Bubu de Montparnasse*, when I came first to Paris.[2] Read at an impressionable age, and under the impressive conditions, the book has always been for me, not merely the best of Charles Louis Philippe's books, but a symbol of the Paris of that time. Little known even now outside of France, Philippe was then none too well-known even within it, though he was already dead, and this book had been published ten years before. I imagine that the Paris of 1910 was more like the Paris of 1900 than like the Paris of 1932: certainly Montparnasse has changed more in these twenty-two years than it could have changed in the preceding ten. In a very much smaller way, to me *Bubu* stood for Paris as some of Dickens' novels stand for London.

The comparison suggested is between a very great novelist and a very limited one, but is not, I think, unprofitable. Had Dickens confined himself to the districts of Tom-all-alone's and Fagin's kitchen the comparison would be closer.[3] Philippe is almost without humour, except such grim humour as is inherent in the behaviour of his characters, as when, at the end of this book, Big Jules says "permit me to roll a cigarette."[4] But he has an intense pity for the humble and oppressed, a pity still more akin to that of Dickens' Russian disciple Dostoievski; and a pathos which as in Dickens and Dostoievski both, trembles on the edge of the maudlin.[5] He differs from both of the greater men by the absence of any religious or humanitarian zeal: he is not explicitly concerned with altering things. And in that he is perhaps the most faithful to the point of view of the humble and oppressed themselves, is more their spokesman than their champion. You can look towards Christianity or towards communism, according to your predisposition, but Philippe is himself no propagandist. It is not the sort of people that Philippe knew best who become Christian zealots or revolutionists; they simply toil and suffer, or take the easiest way out. I remember, some years ago, though not so long ago as 1910 – it was indeed after the War – asking my way, in a town of southern France, of a passing workman. He gave me my direction civilly enough, though with a glance of curiosity at the foreigner; and in parting slapped himself on the chest, and added quite gratuitously, "Moi, je suis de la classe ouvrière: exploitée par les capitalistes."[6] When human beings awake to such a state of consciousness as that, they are far above the stratum which is Philippe's proper material. Whether he is concerned, as in this book, with the prostitutes and mackerels of the Boulevard Sébastopol, or, as in more of his books, with the poorest class of decent-living provincial peasantry, it is with the inarticulate and underfed, those who are too depressed to be rebellious.[7]

His work, like that of many minor writers, is largely autobiographical. Knowing no more of his biography than I do, I find it easy to believe that he himself is the original of Pierre Hardy. The family of Pierre Hardy, toiling humbly and decently in their village in eastern France, that their son might become a Civil Servant in Paris, is very like the family that he depicts more autobiographically in *Charles Blanchard* and *La Mère et l'Enfant*.[8] His great quality is not imagination: it is a sincerity which makes him a faithful recorder of things as they are, and of events as they happened, without irrelevant and disturbing comment. He had a gift which is rare enough: the ability not to think, not to generalise. To be able to select, out of personal experience, what is really significant, to be able not to corrupt it by afterthoughts, is as rare as imaginative invention. I am always impressed, in Philippe, by his fidelity to the powers that were given him; nearly always, even in his worst and most lachrymose moments, he is saying what he has to say, not writing a book. He was not *un homme de lettres*.[9]

I have never thought that any other of his books equals *Bubu*. The pathetic, even when wholly sincere, is a dangerous speciality; and that which, to the author, is the most pathetic, is not always so to the reader. Dickens may himself have wept copiously over little Nell and little Em'ly; they are not nearly so moving to me as the Chancery prisoner in *Pickwick*, of whom is said finally, "He has got his discharge, by God!"[10] Yet in *Charles Blanchard*, *Le Père Perdrix* and *La Mère et l'Enfant*, the love and the pity are so obviously towards real people, so obviously real emotions and not literary confections, that they elicit love and pity from us, though we may feel that this is rather Philippe himself, than the world in which he lived. *Marie Donadieu*, which some have thought his greatest book, has always left me a little cold; as if he had been trying to do something for which he was not quite fitted, something larger and more impersonal, *roman dans le genre*.[11] It has its reality, it has its final phrases, as at the end (I quote from memory): "tu peux chercher un autre homme, Marie. Elle répondit: il faut déjà beaucoup de foi pour chercher."[12] But in attempting something more like a novel, more impersonal, he seems to me to give less of himself, and instead of pity, we are aware rather of an atmosphere of moral putrefaction.

Bubu de Montparnasse, then, seems to me to be the one book in which Philippe struck the most that he could do perfectly. In the books in which he is more purely personal we find ourselves being engulfed in a morass of sentiment; in *Marie Donadieu*, the most "ambitious," in a morass of corruption. What preserves *Bubu* from either extreme, I think, is the precise reality of two figures, le Grand Jules and Bubu himself. Every word that they say, and every word that Philippe says about them, are absolutely veridical; have that authenticity to convince readers who have no knowledge of real *souteneurs* with whom to compare them.[13] They are both perfectly French and universally human: you say "given a man of that class and that way of existence, and a Frenchman in particular, he *would* be like that." Berthe, or Pierre Hardy, presented by themselves, would very likely appear merely as the sentimental harlot or the sentimental young man of artificial fiction; but set against the obduracy of Jules and Bubu, Berthe's softness and pliancy is not a sentimentalised version of reality, but the real thing.[14]

There have been many novels of low life, of metropolitan vice and degradation. Novels of sentimentality, novels of satire, novels of indignation, novels of social reform, novels of prurience. *Bubu de Montparnasse* succeeds in being none of these: emphatically not the last. Philippe certainly disturbs any lingering complacency that we may feel towards the world as it is; but he has no cure to advocate. He is both compassionate and dispassionate; in his book we *blame* no one, we blame not even a "social system"; and even the most virtuous, in reading it, may feel: I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word and deed.[15]

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NOTES

1. TSE was commissioned to write an introduction to an English translation of Charles-Louis Philippe's *Bubu de Montparnasse* (1901) by Caresse Crosby of the Black Sun Press, for whom he had earlier written a preface to Harry Crosby's *Transit of Venus*. On 6 Jan 1931, TSE informed Jacques Porel that he should be "quite glad" to write the preface to *Bubu* for Caresse but was "afraid that it would fall short of her wishes, as I am hardly conversant enough with modern French fiction since the time of C.-L. Philippe to be able to place him exactly or trace

his influence, if any. And I have not read the book, or had a copy in my hands, since 1910." On 20 Nov, TSE wrote to Caresse: "I should think that *Bubu* would be extremely difficult to translate. It really ought to be done by someone who knows something of the underworld of London as well as that of Paris." (*L5* 750). TSE thought Laurence Vail's translation was adequate but in need of revision, especially the slang phrases, and suggested, in a letter of 10 Feb 1932, that Crosby seek further improvements. The translation was published in Mar 1932 as the fourth in the series "Modern Masterpieces in English."

2. TSE read *Bubu de Montparnasse* at the recommendation of Alain-Fournier after arriving in Paris in 1910. At this time, Alain-Fournier was running a campaign in *La Nouvelle Revue française* to erect a bust to Philippe, who had died the previous year. TSE's copies of *Bubu de Montparnasse* and Philippe's *La Mère et l'Enfant* (Éditions de la *NRF*, 4th edition) are inscribed "T. S. Eliot / Paris / September 1911" (Houghton).

3. Tom-All-Alone's is a London slum depicted in *Bleak House* (1853); Fagin's kitchen refers to the London gang of young thieves overseen by the elderly Fagin in *Oliver Twist* (1838).

4. Grand Jules's courtesy toward Pierre comes ironically after Bubu has assaulted Berthe on finding his wife in bed with Pierre, and shortly before Bubu and Jules extort money from him.

5. In "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" (1917), TSE records the following conversation: "I suggested that the great Russian was an admirer of Dickens, and that she also might find that author readable. 'But Dickens is a sentimentalist; Dostoevski is a realist.' I reflected on the amours of Sonia and Raskolnikov, but forbore to press the point" (1:511).

6. "I am from the working class, exploited by the capitalists." TSE took a walking tour of southern France with Ezra Pound in Aug 1919.

7. In French, "maquereau" [a mackerel] is a slang term for a pimp.

8. *La Mère et l'Enfant* [*Mother and Child*] (1900) is an autobiographical evocation of Philippe's own youth. In the summer of 1911, Jean Verdenal wrote to TSE praising *La Mère et l'Enfant* as "a good and beautiful book; as wholesome as bread and milk, without artifice or rhetoric" (*L1* 21-22). *Charles Blanchard* (1910) is a fictionalized account of Philippe's father.

9. *un homme de lettres*: a man of letters.

10. Little Nell and Little Em'ly are the heroines of *The Old Curiosity Shop* (1841) and *David Copperfield* (1850), respectively. The deathbed scene of a chancery prisoner is described in chapter 44 of *Pickwick Papers* (1837).

11. *Le Père Perdrix* (1903) examines the life of a provincial blacksmith; *Marie Donadieu* (1904) is a love story. On 22 Sept 1949, TSE wrote to Violet Schiff to thank her for receipt of a copy of her translation of *Marie Donadieu*, remarking: "It will be a very interesting experience to read this book again, because I have not read it since 1911, at a period when the works of Philippe made a very deep impression upon me." *roman dans le genre*: genre novel.

12. *Read*: "Tu peux chercher un autre homme, Marie. Après tout . . . Elle répondit: – 'Il faut déjà beaucoup de foi pour chercher.'" *Marie Donadieu* (Paris: E. Fasquelle, 1904), 316. *Trans*: "You can look for another man, Marie. After all . . . She replied: 'One must have great faith to look for another.'" Trans. Violet Schiff (London: Grey Walls Press, 1949), 206.

13. souteneur (OED): "A man who lives on the earnings of a prostitute or prostitutes under his protection."

14. In "Dante" (1929), TSE praises Dante's capacity to represent "the real right thing, the power of establishing relations between beauty of the most diverse sorts; it is the utmost power of the poet" (3.726).

15. TSE alludes to the English translation of the Latin Confiteor, a prayer of confession spoken by some Anglo-Catholics before Mass: "I have sinned exceedingly in thought, word, and deed, through my fault, through my fault, through my most grievous fault."

Christianity and Communism

The Listener, 7 (16 Mar 1932) 382-83[1]

I have been tempted to begin my contribution to this discussion with the words of Trinculo in *The Tempest*: "The folly of this island! They say there's but five upon this isle: we are three of them; if th'other two be brained like us, the state totters."[2] I must add that I do not use this quotation in any invidious sense. But it had some relevance to my first thought when I began to prepare my talks: why should a person like myself, whose only reasonable notoriety is due to the composition of verses and jingles, in which I have some skill, be talking on this subject? I am not educated for anything else than verses, and I have little other competence. Why should I be invited to talk to you upon a subject which comprehends everything under the sun? I am neither an historian like Mr. Dawson nor a philosopher like Professor Macmurray.[3] And also, why, except under some mad delusion of vanity, should I have the temerity to accept? If this were merely a personal query, I should not bother you with it; but it seems to me to have a direct bearing upon what we call the "modern dilemma." Lord Russell, speaking in another series of these talks a couple of months ago, warned us against the tyranny of the expert.[4] This is certainly an injunction to be taken to heart; but I may add that the present is also very conspicuously an age of the amateur (at least in the field of discussion) and of popular expositions in book form. After all, Lord Russell himself is an expert in a department as confined, if perhaps more important, than my own; and on the subject on which he was talking he also is a kind of amateur.[5] It seems to me that the reason why we care to listen to amateurs, and to read popular books of science and culture and history, and the reason why the amateurs like to talk and write, is that we are all in dumb revolt against the expert. I do not mean that we wish to remove him from his proper place, or that we wish to replace expert knowledge by mere enthusiasm – God forbid! But we feel that there is an art as well as a science of life; that the specialist is apt to exceed his terms of reference; that he can teach us how to put into effect a particular purpose, but not what purposes are worth having. We feel the need for a point of view from which we can see the world as at least potentially orderly; a point of view wider than the expert's can be, and a world in which we may accept our own tiny lives as having a justifiable place in an intelligible whole.

Here, surely is a form in which the "dilemma," if we call it that, comes home to roost with everybody – with everybody, I mean, who is sufficiently sensitive and conscious. There are many people, I am sure, in every walk of life, who are perfectly satisfied with themselves and with what they are doing. Happy the man, but perhaps not always enviable, to whom never comes the thought, in a sudden if momentary paralysis, "Of what use is my work."[6] It is a thought which might come to the most brilliant or to the most necessary member of the community: to the speculative scientist, the inventor, the financier, the manufacturer and the unskilled labourer; it can come, I testify, to the man of letters. Of what use is this experimenting with rhythms and words, this effort to find the precise metric and the exact image to set down feelings which, if communicable at all, can be communicated to so few that the result seems insignificant compared to the labour? Such thoughts have come to men at every period of civilised history, I make no doubt; but they are especially natural in our own day. We have been told by many philosophers that the world has no design and no purpose; we have seen the revolution of peoples and the downfall of monarchies with very little apparent good coming of it; we see vast machinery for production, and destitution in the midst of it; we hear vulgarization of taste applauded under the name of education; profligacy of manners acclaimed as an advance of civilization; trifling amusements and unnecessary luxuries heralded as a rise in the "standard of living"; and there are at least two million among us who have every excuse for thinking that they are not wanted at all.[7] We have better chances of health than our predecessors, we have immense opportunities for leisure, we are better informed, and I think we have just as good brain and just as much good will; yet we seem at times to be labouring to perfect small parts – or at least to keep them going – of a vast machine which works very badly in performing some function which is unknown to us, if it have any function at all.

I believe that all our problems turn out ultimately to be a religious problem.[8] Its most pressing form, probably, is the economic problem; but economic questions depend finally upon moral questions, as morals depend upon religion. Theology is, of course, the one fundamental science. But in putting the matter so bluntly I by no means suggest that the problem is simple, or its solution only a matter of godliness[; if it were, I should advise you to turn off the wireless and say your prayers.] I shall not say much directly about Christianity; but in all that I say I shall speak from the point of view of orthodox Christianity. At least, I *aim* at orthodoxy. For heresy, which consists in emphasizing one aspect of the mystery to the exclusion of the other, is a natural tendency of the mind; a complete living orthodoxy is (except through the infusion of exceptional grace) almost impossible to the frail human being at every moment of his life; which is one reason why the Church is necessary. My point of view will be implicit throughout, but I am not addressing only those who share it, or those who might be converted to it. I feel, however, that my only slight hopes of saying anything worth listening to is to present myself as a churchman, a writer of verses, and a literary critic; and to set the problems before you as they have affected me in my own narrow experience of living.

If you have any doubt that your problems and their solution must bring you to matters of religion, you have only to turn eastward – towards Russia.[9] I know very little about Russia; I do not know whether the experiment being made there will turn out to be, in the worldly sense, a failure or a success. If the system can he made to work, and if the Russians can be adapted to it, or bred into the sort of being who can flourish under it, that is their affair. But I should not like it any the better for that: for Russian communism is a religion, and a religion which is not mine. Of course, other and better qualified critics – among them Mr. Maynard Keynes[10] – have remarked this fact before; and it is indeed patent enough; but the full implications do not seem to me to me to have yet come home to all. If you *like* the Russian religion, I cannot expect to make any impression upon you. But if you do not like it, then you must keep in mind that you can never fight a religion except with another religion.[11] That is not a very novel thought either, but again, people do not seem to be very eager to act upon it. If we are incapable of a faith at least as strong as that which appears to animate the ruling class of Russia, if we are incapable of dying for a cause, then Western Europe and the Americans might as well be reorganised on the Moscow model at once. And you cannot hope to conquer merely with election cockades:[12] merely with British Conservatism or British Liberalism or British Socialism. Nor will you succeed in inventing another brand new religion to compete with communism. There can only be the two, Christianity and communism: and there, if you like, is your dilemma. For dilemma is defined in the *Concise Oxford Dictionary* as "a position which leaves only a choice between equal evils," and I fear that the majority of us do not want to choose either; at least, we do not want to go very far in either direction.

In speaking of Russian communism in this way I have one fear at the back of my mind, which I think I may as well utter frankly. I am afraid of exciting the approval of people whose approval I do not especially want. For those to whom communism means primarily inconvenience, discomfort, poverty and privation, and the absence of social seasons and fixtures, I have nothing of interest to say. To those to whom communism means barricades and machine guns, I can only say that the ends to he achieved by violence are what matter more than violence itself. With those to whom communism means forced labour and timber camps, I can sympathise; but must add that if we are to criticise conditions abroad we must first look well to conditions at home.

I have thought it best to put the problem from the very start as a religious problem, instead of leaving that to develop later. For I knew that some of you would foresee what I was coming to, and say to yourselves: "This solution is merely that we should go to church regularly, and communicate at least once a year, and repeat the creeds and respect the bishops." And this criticism I wished to forestall: that is not what I mean at all.[13] I am not here concerned with the conversion of the world to Christianity, but with the organisation of the world in a Christian way, which is quite another aspect. The former would no doubt, when complete in the individual as well as in the mass, bring about the latter; but that is a state of affairs which has never yet been known; whereas during a long period of time Europe was, in fact, organised in a Christian way. It was certainly a very imperfect way of being imperfectly Christian. I do not want to be classified as a "mediaevalist." To erect a Christian state, a state among Christian states, we should need now a very different temper from that either of mediaevalism or of ordinary conservatism. We are in many ways in a position of advantage over our mediaeval ancestors: we are more humane, cleaner and have better table manners; we may be less saintly than some, but we are less beastly than others; we have material comforts, hygiene, machinery and invention, which we do not wish to dispense with but to manipulate wisely. The forms of social organisation in Christian states in the Middle Ages provide much from which we may learn, but little that we can exactly reproduce.[14] We are more civilised than our ancestors, though we ought to be a great deal more civilised than we are, and they have perhaps more reason to be proud of what they did with their talent than we have. Because, instead of preserving affirming and refining their spiritual organisation of society we have progressively secularised it until our values are at war with each other and with life itself.

Now the Christian organisation of society is an ideal towards the realisation of which non-Christians can co-operate. What must no doubt deter many people of goodwill at the outset, when they hear such a phrase as "the Christian organisation of a society," is the fear of losing their liberty; the bogey of domination by some ecclesiastical hierarchy either fanatically sincere or hypocritically self-seeking. They are repelled by the harsh necessity, which they fear may be imposed upon them whether they *see* its necessity or no, of the Christian doctrine of marriage; their imaginations may even begin to play about history-book memories like "pardons and indulgences."[15] [Well,] It is possible that in some respects we have now too much liberty – or, I would say, too much licence; it is possible that very few people have a true notion of what true liberty is; but the kind of organisation I have in mind would give more liberty than we have now; more freedom of choice, more opportunity for all to obtain the real *goods* of life. I have no expectation and no desire to enforce the non-Christian to obey rules of life in which he cannot believe; I should only wish to persuade him, by practical results, that that rule of life is better than his own, if he has any.

For, indeed, we live in a world in which true liberty declines. Life becomes more precarious, too, without the freedom which makes precariousness tolerable: I mean the freedom and opportunity for adventure. If we have an income above the barest subsistence, we must give a fourth or a fifth to the State.[16] A shift in the exchanges, and those of us who should travel can no longer afford to travel; at any moment, in a modern State, your food may cost you more or your wages may be worth less.[17] The man with a job is in terror of losing it; and of those without a job he is the least unhappy who can most readily resign himself to apathy. We have comfort without grandeur, and amusement without recreation (remember what the word "recreation" means!).[18] If we have liberty, what is it that we have liberty to do? The Russian must resign his liberty in favour of the Russian State, or in favour of a phantom world-State; and in return, I understand, he is assigned a certain extent of licence. I should prefer to resign my liberty, if I must, in favour of something better than that; but the Russian at least resigns his liberty in favour of *something*. [You can point, of course, to the abuses of Calvinism in Geneva; or of pre-war Russia, or even eighteenth century England; or if you like to the Inquisition. These and others were evils of definite times and places; the world has changed in some respects for the better; and no one could impose such tyranny upon the British people today. There may be danger of other, more insidious forms of tyranny. One reason – among others – why I am sure that the Russian form of communism would fail in England, is that I do not believe that any class in this country could endure such minute control of their lives – though it is astonishing how much control they can endure. The only result would be, not the Russian kind of order, but chaos – which, I take it, nobody wants. I think that the kind of state I have in mind would help to free us from the tyranny under which we suffer at present: a tyranny without purpose and meaning, the tyranny of what are called natural forces, or economic laws.]

To the baser minded, in the modern world, liberty, as I have suggested, tends to be tantamount to mere licence. The more intellectual experience more refined temptations: some of them are those, sometimes among the most gifted and the most conspicuous, who value so highly what seems to them intellectual liberty that they refuse to believe in anything. For that is a definite refusal. And in their own interest, being what they are, they are right; for to have a passionate conviction about anything is like falling in love: it is not merely to risk being ridiculous (and such people are afraid of being ridiculous, though nothing makes a man more ridiculous really than the fear of ridicule); it is to surrender oneself to something, to surrender liberty, the liberty of thinking irresponsibly.[19] The chief liberty of man, however, is the liberty to choose what master he shall serve. "*Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are, to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness.*"[20]

Towards any profound conviction one is borne gradually, perhaps insensibly over a long period of time, by what Newman called "powerful concurrent reasons."[21] Some of these reasons may appear to the outside world irrelevant; some are purely personal; and each individual, perhaps, has some reasons which could concern, some influences which could have influenced, no one but himself. At some moment or other, a kind of crystallisation occurs, in which appears an element of *faith* not strictly definable from any reason or combination of reasons. I am not speaking, mind you, of conversion to Christian faith only, but of conversion in general; there are some interesting remarks on the subject of conversion in a book by the great French novelist Stendhal entitled *On the Subject of Love*.[22] In my own case, I believe that one of the reasons was that the Christian scheme seemed to me the only one which would work. I hasten to add that this is not a reason for believing; it is a tenable hypothesis to maintain that there is *no* scheme which will work. That was simply the removal of any reason for believing in anything else, the erasure of a prejudice, the arrival at the skepticism which is the preface to conversion. And when I say "work," I am quite aware that I had my own notion of what the "working" of a scheme comprehends. Among other things, the Christian scheme seemed the only possible scheme which found a place for values which I must maintain or perish (and belief comes first and practice second), the belief, for instance, in holy living and holy dying, in sanctity, chastity, humility, austerity.[23] And it is in favour of the Christian scheme, from the Christian point of view, that it never has, and never will, work perfectly. No perfect scheme can work perfectly with imperfect men; if the Russian scheme ever comes to "work" perfectly with what *I* call imperfect men, then to me the Russian system will be condemned by its very efficiency. You can eliminate the difficulties of the individual by eliminating individuality; original sin by eliminating sinners. But no system that continues to repeat, and must repeat, the words "*be ye perfect*"[24] can he expected to work perfectly. Nor can a system which respects free will, the right of the human being to choose whether to serve sin unto death, or obedience unto righteousness.

[The subject cannot be continued, I regret to say, without tackling the old conundrum of "Religion and Science." I accept the catchword as a point of departure; but I am not prepared to let pass either the word "religion" or the word "science." I dislike using the word "religion" in that vague way; for me religion implies orthodox faith and apostolic succession. And I dislike using the word "science" in that vague way; for me science is a vague term covering various "sciences," one of which, by the way, is theology. So I propose to treat

1. The Christian faith in relation to speculative physics.
2. In relation to speculative biology.
3. In relation to practical biology. Speculative biology and practical biology are probably divisions which no biologist would accept; but I am concerned to distinguish for instance, the problem presented to Christianity by the theory of evolution, and the problems presented by the modern science of eugenics, which are not the same thing.
4. In relation to economic science. Perhaps for our time this is the most pressing problem of all. Ours is the age of the economist; an age in which all of us, including many professional entertainers like myself would prefer to devote their attention to the one or two jobs for which they feel fitted, are somehow compelled to think about economics. But at present every Christian, and especially the

> Christian layman, who leaves far too much of the intellectual burden to his spiritual advisers, must be concerned with the realization of a Christian view of social and economic organization. It is the only alternative to communism. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey . . ." I should like even at this point to quote a few words from a writer whom I greatly admire: "consumption absolute is the end, crown and perfection of production; and wise consumption is a far more difficult art than wise production. Twenty people can gain money for one who can use it; and the vital question, for individual and for nation, is never 'how much do they make?' but 'to what purpose do they spend?'"[25] These are the words of one whom I consider among the greatest of English economists; as a writer, even greater than Adam Smith, the Scot; it is John Ruskin. Ruskin has not been altogether happy in his succession; and public problems have changed their outward appearance since his time; but I do not think there is any better introduction to this part of our problem than Unto This Last.[26]

This is something like my programme for my three following half-hours. Meanwhile, I should like you, if you will, to think over what I have been saying so far; and if you feel that my approach is mistaken, or my analysis inadequate, there is time for you to write to me, and for me, if I am convinced, to alter the construction of my next talk.]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 5 p.m. on Sunday, 6 Mar, by BBC radio as TSE's first talk in a series entitled "The Modern Dilemma." Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets.

2. *The Tempest* III.ii.4-6.

3. TSE's four talks in this series followed broadcasts on "The Modern Dilemma" by the cultural historian Christopher Dawson (1889-1970), lecturer at University College in Exeter, and the moral philosopher Professor John Macmurray (1891-1976), Grote Professor of Mind and Logic at London University. TSE knew both men. On 16 Aug 1929, TSE wrote to Dawson to solicit a contribution for the *Criterion*. In Apr 1930, Dawson published the first of four essays in the *Criterion* as well as *Christianity and Sex* as No. 13 in the Criterion Miscellany series. Macmurray published three reviews in the *Criterion* between 1929 and 1931.

TSE was sent the full texts of Dawson's broadcasts by Charles Siepmann on 16 Nov 1931, to which TSE replied: "I do feel that, excellent as they are, they are much too continuously abstract to make a very strong impression on any large public. If he could occasionally descend abruptly to concrete and striking illustrations I think his talks would seem very much more living" (*L5* 739). After receiving Macmurray's notes for his broadcasts, TSE informed Siepmann on 21 Jan 1932: "I am wholly in agreement with him."

4. Bertrand Russell, "How Science Has Changed Society," *The Listener*, 7 (13 Jan 1932), 39-40, 42. Russell's talk was broadcast on 7 Jan in the symposium "Science and Civilization." Russell comments: "It is likely that the part played by science in daily life will grow greater, so that the importance of experts will increase rather than diminish. We have, therefore, to expect that government by experts will largely replace government by the will of the people, and this is likely to happen even if people still vote and Parliaments are still supposed to choose the Government" (39).

5. Russell was educated as a philosopher and mathematician.

6. An echo of John Dryden's translation of Horace's *Odes* Book III, 29, VIII: "Happy the Man, and happy he alone, / He, who can call to-day his own: / He, who secure within, can say, / To-morrow do thy worst, for I have lived to-day."

7. TSE discusses the political resonance of the phrase "standard of living" in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Oct 1930 (4.191). Unemployment in Great Britain reached 2.7 million in 1932.

8. TSE supports Dawson's claim in an earlier broadcast: "The modern dilemma is essentially a spiritual one, and every one of its main aspects moral, political and scientific, brings us back to the need for a religious solution." *The Modern Dilemma: The Problem of European Unity* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932), 91.

9. The relevance of Soviet Russia to "The Modern Dilemma" was introduced by the talks of Dawson and Macmurray. While Dawson attacked the threat posed by Communism to the (Christian) unity of European culture, Macmurray saw in Marxism the reassertion of social aspects of Judeo-Christian tradition.

10. Virginia Woolf recalls Keynes telling TSE at a dinner party that "the youth had no religion save Communism and this was worse than nothing." Quoted by Quentin Bell in *Virginia Woolf: A Biography* (London: Hogarth Press, 1972), 177. In the section titled "What Is the Communist Faith?" in his essay "A Short View of Russia" (1925), Keynes stated that "if Communism achieves a certain success, it will achieve it, not as an improved economic technique, but as a religion." *Essays in Persuasion* (London: Macmillan, 1931), 129

11. TSE echoes Dawson's assertion that "The Communist Party is a religious sect which exists to spread the true faith" (*The Modern Dilemma*, 95).

12. cockade (OED): "A ribbon, knot of ribbons, rosette, or the like, worn in the hat as a badge of office or party, or as part of a livery dress."

13. TSE echoes the women in "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock": "That is not what I meant at all."

14. Dawson's broadcast claimed: "We are not, indeed, going back to the Middle Ages, but we are going forward to a new age which is no less different from the last age than that was from the mediaeval period" (*Modern Dilemma*, 100). TSE possessed a copy of Dawson's *The Making of Europe* (1932), which argues that medieval Europe was the most creative period in Western history.

15. An indulgence was a type of pardon given by the Catholic Church for the penance due for sins. In 1517, Martin Luther published *Ninety-Five Theses on the Power and Efficacy of Indulgences*, attacking the practice in the Catholic Church of selling indulgences.

16. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord Snowden, increased income tax in his budgets of 1930 and 1931.

17. During Sept 1931, the value of the pound fell by more than a quarter on the foreign exchange from $4.86 to $3.23.

18. recreation (OED): "The action or fact of refreshing or entertaining oneself through a pleasurable or interesting pastime, amusement, activity, etc. (esp. habitually); amusement, entertainment."

19. In the introduction to *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), TSE asserts: "surrendering ourselves, with adequate knowledge of other systems, to some system of our own or of some one else, is as needful part of a man's life as falling in love or making any contract, so is it necessary to surrender ourselves to some interpretation of the poetry we like" (4.149).

20. Romans 6:16

21. Cardinal Newman describes the "illative sense" combining intellect and imagination as "creating a certitude of its truth by arguments too various for direct enumeration, too personal and deep for words, too powerful and concurrent for refutation." *An Essay in Aid of a Grammar of Assent* (London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1903), 492. TSE reflects on this passage in "The *Pensées* of Pascal" (1931) (4.342).

22. In his treatise *De l'Amour* [*On Love*] (1822), Stendhal describes falling in love as a process of crystallization in the mind, whereby the beloved excites admiration, acknowledgment, hope, and then delight.

23. On 18 Mar, Stephen Spender wrote to TSE to object to this sentence. TSE responds, quoting from Spender's letter, in his fourth talk "Building Up the Christian World" in this series (4.467-68).

24. Matthew 5:48: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect."

25. Ruskin, *Unto This Last* (London: Allen, 1906), 101.

26. On 27 Jan 1932, TSE explained to Siepmann that "Ruskin, by the way, is a good respectable name to give credit to views which might be considered subversive when attached to other names." TSE discussed "Ruskin as a moralist and a social reformer" and included *Unto This Last* (1862) in his *Syllabus for a Tutorial Class in Modern English Literature* (1916) (1.480).

Mr. Harold Monro: A Poet and his Ideal

The Times, 46084 (17 Mar 1932) 16

Mr. Harold Monro, a distinguished poet and man of letters, died on Tuesday, the day after his fifty-third birthday, at a nursing home at Broadstairs.[1] His death will be mourned not only by admirers of his own verse, but by all in England who have cared seriously, during the last 30 years, for serious poetry.

Both his father and his maternal grandfather were engineers. He was born at Brussels, and was educated partly abroad, so that he spoke French, German, and Italian fluently, and at Radley, whence he went up to Caius.[2] After taking his degree at Cambridge he spent much time on the Continent for several years. One of the results was *The Chronicle of a Pilgrimage* (1909), the prose account of a walking tour from Paris to Milan; but he had already published a volume of poems in 1906 and two in 1907.[3] His importance in the literary life of London dates from 1911, when he founded, in conjunction with the Poetry Society, the *Poetry Review*, in the first number of which (January, 1912) he affirmed that "Poetry should be, once more, seriously and reverently discussed in its relation to life, and the same tests and criteria applied to it as to the other arts."[4] Difficulties arose, and Monro retired at the end of a year. In March, 1913, Monro issued the first number of another periodical to be entirely under his own direction entitled *Poetry and Drama*, which survived with distinction until December, 1914. In the first number are contributions by Rupert Brooke, Edward Thomas, Sir Henry Newbolt, Maurice Hewlett, James Elroy Flecker, and Lascelles Abercrombie; and in other numbers there was hardly any young poet or man of letters of any talent who was not a contributor.[5]

Monro's enthusiasm next led him to found the Poetry Bookshop, for which he took an old house in a small street off Theobald's-lane.[6] It was discovered by most readers of poetry in London, and became also a place of pilgrimage for American visitors; and its removal to the more commonplace neighbourhood of Willoughby-street, Great Russell-street, was regretted. Monro then started the series of Poetry Readings which have continued almost without interruption.[7] Of the poets who were well known when the Readings began, and of those who have become known since, there can be few who have not given readings of their own poetry, or of their favourite poets, either at the first or the present dwelling of the Bookshop. Monro's own taste was sympathetic both to the "Georgian" poetry, which flourished just before the War, and to the more modern poetry which has risen since.[8] His own verse had something of this mediating character. He had – what is none too common among verse writers – a steady capacity for improvement; and his latest poems are considered by good judges to be his best. The development is already evident in *Strange Meetings* (1917); it continues in *Real Property* (1922) and in *The Earth for Sale* (1928) and a poem published recently in the *Criterion* indicates that his development had not reached a climax.[9] Throughout, however, there is a quality peculiar to himself; a way of giving to the familiar and commonplace a dreamlike and sometimes nightmarish character which is unlike the mode of either his earlier or his later colleagues.

While his poetry will remain to justify itself, his importance in the literary life of London in his time may be overlooked. As editor, as publisher, and as the proprietor of the Poetry Bookshop his efforts were wholly disinterested, and indeed meant much sacrifice of his private means. He was more concerned that other people should write poetry, that able writers in difficulties should be helped to write, and that a larger public should read and enjoy poetry, than he was concerned with what he wrote himself. One of the causes dearest to his heart was the instigation of sociability among men of letters, and to this he devoted his own social gifts. In the few years before the War he was active in keeping poets of diverse gifts in friendly contact; among them the group – including Ezra Pound, F. S. Flint, Richard Aldington, and H. D. – who produced *The Imagist Anthology*, and in his circle was included T. E. Hulme, who, after his death in action in 1917, has had a great influence upon the philosophical and critical theory of the present time.[10] After the War he resumed his efforts, with what was left of his own generation, and with recruits from the younger generation. He had a great gift of hospitality, and was happiest when providing a fireside at which writers with common sympathies could sit and talk until late hours of the night. Such devotion to such an ideal as his – the ideal of poetry and of fraternity among poets – is rare always, and nowadays difficult to pursue. Even in the last year or two, when crippled by increasing ill-health and pain, Monro never lost faith in his ideal.[11] He was twice married, and had one son by his first marriage. His second wife was Miss Alida Klemantaski.[12]

The funeral will be at Golders Green on Saturday at 11.30.[13]

NOTES

1. TSE's obituary is unsigned. Monro died at Cliff Combe nursing home in Broadstairs, Kent, on 16 Mar 1932. On 30 Mar, TSE invited Ezra Pound to write an obituary essay on Monro for the *Criterion* "if you feel sufficient and not over critical enthusiasm for his work," adding that "My own points were put very briefly in the obituary which I wrote for *The Times* which you may have seen. That is, so far as his work goes I feel that it did on the whole improve steadily up to the last (which is a poem in *The Criterion* a few months ago) that it has a character which clearly distinguishes it both from the Georgian work on the one hand and our own on the other, and finally that he received very little appreciation in his life-time either for poetry or for his social work." Pound's essay "Harold Monro," which quoted from Eliot's private "editorial directions," appeared in the *Criterion* for July 1932 (581-92) alongside F. S. Flint's tribute to Monro in his "Verse Chronicle" (684-89).

2. Monro was born in Brussels on 14 Mar 1879, the son of a civil engineer. He was educated at Radley College, Oxford, and read French and German at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, 1898-1901.

3. *The Chronicle of a Pilgrimage* (London: Sampson Low, 1909). Monro's earliest volumes of poetry were *Poems* (1906) and *Judas* (1907). He published two volumes of prose but no other volume of verse in 1907.

4. "Preface," *Poetry Review*, 1 (Jan 1912),3. Monro resigned his editorship of the *Poetry Review* in Dec 1912.

5. Eight issues of *Poetry and Drama* appeared quarterly from Mar 1913 until Dec 1914. In the first number, Brooke contributed an article on John Webster and a review of Wilfrid Gibson; Thomas contributed an article on Ella Wheeler Wilcox and a review of Yeats; Newbolt reviewed the first volume of *Georgian Poetry*; Hewlett and Flecker contributed poetry and Abercrombie a verse play. On 21 Jan 1947, TSE recalled for Marvin Magalaner that he did not meet Monro until after World War I and that "I was not acquainted with these periodicals [*Poetry Review* and *Poetry and Drama*] when they were coming out and only read back numbers after their demise."

Sir Henry Newbolt (1862-1938), whose patriotic verses divided opinion, included TSE in his anthology *New Paths on Helicon* (1928). On 13 Sept 1927, TSE told Conrad Aiken that several poets of the previous generation "Newbolt, Binyon and Gibson were necessary" (*L3* 700). Maurice Hewlett (1861-1923) was a poet and popular novelist: TSE spoke alongside Hewlett and other writers at a Lycaeum Club dinner in London in Nov 1920. Poet and literary critic Lascelles Abercrombie (1881-1938), since 1929 Professor of English Literature at Bedford College, London. Monro declined TSE's invitation to review Abercrombie's *The Theory of Poetry* (1924), although two later volumes of Abercrombie's literary criticism were noticed in the *Criterion*. On 9 Aug 1932, TSE wrote to Richard Church to express his sympathy with attempts to raise funds for Abercrombie: "I am doubtful whether any of the younger people of wealth could be induced to take very much interest in an older poet like Abercrombie. We go out of date so quickly."

6. Monro opened the Poetry Bookshop at 35 Devonshire Street, Theobald's Road, Bloomsbury, in Jan 1913.

7. TSE frequently attended poetry readings at the Poetry Bookshop when it relocated to 38 Great Russell Street, opposite the British Museum, in 1926. TSE's collaborators on the *Criterion*, including Monro, met regularly here to discuss editorial matters.

8. Monro's Poetry Bookshop published all five volumes of the *Georgian Poetry* anthologies between 1912 and 1922. TSE reviewed the third anthology, *Georgian Poetry: 1916-1917* (1917) in "Verse Pleasant and Unpleasant" (1.679). Monro included generous selections from contributors to *Georgian Poetry*, as well as from their modernist rivals, in his Phoenix Library anthology *Twentieth Century Poetry* (1929).

9. TSE praised Monro's *Strange Meetings* in "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry, I" (1917) (1:576). Monro sent TSE a copy of *Real Property*. John Gould Fletcher reviewed *The Earth for Sale* in the *Criterion* for Sept 1928 (121). Monro's *Elm Angel* (1930) was published by Faber in the Ariel Poems series. TSE refers to Monro's poem about his final illness, "Bitter Sanctuary," which had recently appeared in the *Criterion* of Oct 1931 (58-59).

10. Monro was the publisher of *Des Imagistes* (London: Poetry Bookshop, 1914). T. E. Hulme lodged briefly at the Poetry Bookshop in Devonshire Street.

11. Monro criticized London's poetry cliques in *Some Contemporary Poets* (1920), which was discussed by TSE in his Apr 1921 "London Letter" for the *Dial* (2.334).

12. Monro married Dorothy Elizabeth Browne in 1903 (dissolved in 1916); a son, Nigel, was born in 1904. Monro married Alida Klemantaski in 1920. She ran the Poetry Bookshop after her husband's death until it closed in 1935.

13. TSE attended Monro's funeral at Golders Green Crematorium on 19 Mar with F. S. Flint and Ralph Hodgson.

Religion and Science: A Phantom Dilemma

The Listener, 7 (23 Mar 1932) 428-29[1]

Last week I was concerned chiefly, in a general way, with the "dilemma" of Christianity and Communism. But the dilemma which presents itself to more people is the supposed dilemma of Religion *versus* Science. If my first dilemma, Christianity and Communism, is real – as I firmly believe it is – then it follows that the second dilemma, Religion and Science, is a phantom. For if the real dilemma is between one religion and another, we can hardly have, on top of that, another dilemma between religion and science. Too many dilemmas would certainly spoil my broth, and I hope at least to raise the question in your minds, whether the conundrum "Religion or Science?" has any more meaning than the famous riddle which vexed Alice: "Why is a raven like a writing desk?"[2] The immediate response will be, I dare say: "You are juggling with words. The sense in which you call Communism a religion, if justifiable at all, is not the sense in which Christianity is a religion. Science is only in conflict with the traditional religions such as Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and the sects of India; it is perfectly in accord with a religion (if you call it that) which denies the 'supernatural.' That is to say, it is perfectly in accord with Communism."

Well, to begin with – in the hope that I have put this reply to myself fairly – science can hardly be in accord with Communism until it is in accord with itself. Not only the various Christian divisions, but all of the great religions I have named, are in accord on something: they all accept what we call the supernatural. But nowadays science, by which we must mean various eminent scientists, does not seem to be in accord on any religious question. Two or three eminent mathematicians and physicists whom I have in mind hold widely divergent views; two or three psychologists, equally eminent in their own profession, differ just as widely from each other; and there is no manner of concord between the conclusions of physicists and psychologists.

And secondly, if you say: "But if you call Communism a religion, it is a scientific religion in that it denies the supernatural and is solidly based upon what is observable in this world," then I must say that the term "scientific religion" is just nonsense: the moment the emotions are engaged upon a goal to be reached, an entity to be adored, we have leapt a chasm separating religion from science. What, for instance, is "propaganda" – something highly developed, I understand, in Soviet Russia, and also highly developed, though often for less creditable purposes, in Western Europe and America?[3] It is merely the art of manipulating what we might call, in "scientific" terminology, the "lower religious centres." Once everybody has had a thorough grounding in "science," it will become impossible to wheedle anybody into any course of action: for science can never tell us what is ultimately desirable. "The dictatorship of the proletariat" is a fine politico-religious phrase.[4] It seduces the multitude, because it persuades each, *qua* individual, that he or she will get something out of it. That is not a religious sentiment. It seduces the few to genuine sacrifice, by giving them religious satisfaction; for the proletariat becomes then a synonym for God. [And there are only two ultimate motive powers: the love of God and the hate of God; whichever you have, you are a believer.] To sum up: anything which requires genuine self-sacrifice tends toward a religion. [To many people, the "supernatural" means merely miracles. But when you see the meaning of "supernatural" more fully, you may still find it hard to believe, but you will see that there is nothing else in which to believe.]

We have yet to attack the subject of the destructive influence of scientific enquiry upon religious belief. The influence of scientific advance upon the popular mind, in the last few hundred years, has undoubtedly been very great; but why and how this influence has been exerted is by no means a simple problem. A tendency towards belief in a mechanistic, as contrasted with a religious universe, is present in the work of two men who were certainly not aware of this implication of their thought. Francis Bacon and René Descartes in the seventeenth century were pious men, or at least assumed the appearance of piety; and they would have shrunk from the conclusion that they were preparing a world with no God in it.[5] It was not as scientists, but as philosophers theorising about science, that they influenced belief. And here is what I think you will find everywhere: that no scientific discovery influences people either for or against revealed religion, except in so far as there already exists an atmosphere either favourable or unfavourable to religion. In the case of the individual scientist there are two influences: first, he may find that an acceptance of revealed religion, or, as the case may be, a rejection of it, is for himself at his moment of time the most convenient state of mind for the pursuit of his investigations; second, he may employ his scientific knowledge in support of an emotional state which he probably shares with many other people. My old master, Josiah Royce, now mostly forgotten but a great philosopher in his day, wrote a paper which I wish I might read again, in which he instanced the frequent occasions on which philosophical theory has anticipated and prepared the way for scientific discovery.[6] My own contention is that mankind is usually prepared to interpret any scientific discovery that may come in one way rather than another. It is generally assumed that any scientific discovery *must* have some important bearing upon our conception of the universe – not merely the physical universe but the spiritual universe as well – and ultimately upon our conduct and our emotional life. It very often does, but chiefly because we take it for granted that it will. The assumption is very rarely challenged; nevertheless, I see no reason for accepting it.

[One of the simplest and most obvious examples is the Darwinian hypothesis. Darwin demonstrated a number of very important and indubitable facts; but the theory of natural evolution was already in the air. It is, of course, as old as the hills, or at least as old as Greek philosophy before Socrates; but it was advanced particularly in the eighteenth century by the French journalist Diderot, who had a faculty for lucky, and sometimes unlucky, anticipations.[7] Its moral aspect is clear in Tennyson's In Memoriam.[8] Nowadays nobody still imagines that the actual discoveries of Darwin and later biologists disprove Christianity; why should people at the time have supposed that it did? The answer is that they wanted to. There was, I suppose, a considerable amount of unintelligent opposition on the part of religious people, as there usually is; the religious people, many of them, concurred with the advanced and liberal people in believing that The Origin of Species was damaging to the Christian Faith.[9] The literalness of the Book of Genesis was all that was in question; and that – which had been very pleasantly called into question by Voltaire a century before in his commentary on that Book – was hardly important.[10] Though some of us nowadays are inclined to believe that in the Book of Genesis may be concealed most profound truth. When, again, the great anthropologists of the nineteenth century brought to light the folklore and religious practices of primitive peoples and ancient civilisation, men were at first horrified or pleased by what seemed another way of undermining Christianity. Later, it was discovered that the existence of parallels to Christianity in remote places and remote times could be used equally well to defend as to attack Christianity, just as Sam Weller's friend the pieman could make a pork pie or a veal-and-ham pie out of the same innocent material.[11]]

How then has it come about that religious faith has altered and weakened since the Middle Ages, until it is no longer the rule and standard of social as well as individual life, but a mere extra, like French and Music, which a minority of people treat themselves to? To answer this question satisfactorily I should need not only a great deal more space than I have, but infinitely more detailed knowledge. I can only call it dogmatically a progressive spiritual deterioration.[12] Yet it seems a deterioration which in some unfathomable way – for here we touch on the deepest mysteries of suffering and sin – was necessary: necessary at times that humanity should worship false gods and demi-gods, though how to square that with the salvation of individual souls I do not know.[13] Better to say, perhaps, that even the wisest of human beings is so muddleheaded, without God, that he cannot destroy an evil without destroying some good, or grasp at some good without grasping at some evil; the wheat never grows without the tares[14] heeded free enquiry; we needed an atmosphere in which the several sciences could flourish and develop: we needed invention and machinery. Had we – I mean our ancestors for twelve or fifteen generations, and we must bear the responsibility for our ancestors, for we are of them and they are in us – been better men, we could have got all these advantages without giving up the good things that we have given up: I say, as I said last week, the belief in holy living and holy dying, in sanctity, chastity, humility, austerity, asceticism, the belief in Tragedy – not pagan Tragedy, but Christian Tragedy. If we (using "we" as I have just used it) had been good enough, we could have had the benefits of science, invention, medicine, and hygiene, and all the good things that the last three hundred years have brought us, without giving up any goods. But there seem to be times when the bath water gets so bad that if we are not clever enough to remove the baby first, then the baby really has to go too.[15] The actual question is: now we have gained these benefits, are we worthy to use them?

If what I suggest is true that it is not science that has destroyed religious belief but our preference of unbelief that has made illegitimate use of science, then it clearly follows that we should be ready to decline politely any support which a more modern science may offer to religion. This is the peril of our own brief moment. The sort of people who are swayed now to believe that "after all, there is a something" are exactly the same mob which was swayed to believe that, after all, there is not anything. Please understand that I am not criticising the attitudes of the eminent scientists themselves; nor am I criticising their more popular books, which even I can understand in part, and some of which I have read with pleasure and I hope profit. I instance Sir James Jeans' *The Mysterious Universe* and Professor Eddington's *Science and the Unseen World*.[16] I am only criticising an uncritical attitude of the public towards these writers and their books, an attitude shared, I am sorry to say, sometimes by theological writers who ought to know better. What are we to make of the sympathy with religion avowed by several distinguished scientists? As autobiography of interesting men, such work is itself of great interest; as an admission of the limitation of science it is invaluable. It goes to show that outside of their special field men of science are just ignorant men like ourselves, with no better clue to the mystery than we have.[17] And that makes them all the more likeable. If they proceed to erect some positive theological scheme of their own they are indulging an eccentricity, though not so comic as I should be if I tried to improve upon the quantum theory in physics.[18]

But it is clear that the popular attitude of hailing modern physical science as a *support* of religion is very misguided. To remove an obstacle is not the same thing as to raise a support. It is just the same old superstition of science: you are continuing to make the natural sciences the key to ultimate truth, though the key now unlocks a different door. For to most of us science is at best a faith, and at worst a superstition; most of us do not *know* any more science than we should have done had we lived three thousand years ago. We do not understand Einstein's views any better than we understand those of St. Augustine or St. Athanasius.[19] I dare say that we are impressed by the certainly impressive practical results of scientific enquiry; but engineering and plant-breeding are no clue to ultimate truth; and the genius and ingenuity which have gone to build up the machinery by which I am speaking to you are no guarantee that what I am saying is worth listening to.

The history of the last two hundred years does, I think, bear out my contention that the movement away from Christianity came before scientific discovery, and merely made use of it; so that what we want to do now is not to make use of it for another purpose, in the same way, but to see that we must dispense with it. And that would be a great benefit. For if we understand that religion has nothing to lose nothing to gain by the progress of science, then we are at every moment prepared to give up some cherished belief, such as the belief in the movement of the sun round the earth, which we had previously thought belonged to religion and now find belongs only to science.[20] There are certain dogmas which cannot be given up; it is possible that we still hold some beliefs as part of our faith which really belong only to immature science. We have had superstition in religion and we have had superstition in science; we can do without both.

What I wish to insist upon is not so much that speculative science cannot cure our maladies of thought and will, but the other aspect: that the advance of scientific knowledge is *not* the cause of them – not, at any rate, the rational cause. It may, incidentally, have disturbed our scale of values and often made us mistake the means for the end; but in my opinion mechanical invention has affected our inner as well our outer lives far more than the free enquiry of natural science. But even mechanical invention – though its unrestrained exploitation by the human race which has not yet proved itself adult enough to be trusted with the control of such engines is perhaps the immediate cause of our actual difficulties – is secondary. What really makes the difference is not reason at all, but desire.

It is very difficult at this point to avoid obscurity and misunderstanding. I do not mean that either belief or scepticism is essentially irrational. The intellectual case for Christianity is very strong indeed, and one which demands a great deal of study; and to be quite fair, there is a good case to be made out for atheism as well. But it is not hard thinking which causes such a thing as the gradual drift away from Christianity during the last few centuries, but rather following a line of least resistance. Many people assume that, if the Christian faith had been true, Europe would have stuck to it; and the reason why the majority of people, in the most civilised countries, have drifted away from it, must be that it is not true. But this belief goes together with another crude faith, the faith that progress in enlightenment and civilisation is something automatic, that to improve from generation to generation is natural to man; and when doubt is cast on this belief that things will get better just of themselves, people are apt to fall back into despair. But civilisation is a much more complicated thing than that. We know perfectly well that at various times and in various places civilisation has been more highly developed, in some of its most essential values, than it is now. At nearly every stage in history we can discern that something is being gained, and something being lost. As the world goes on, therefore, the word "civilisation" comes to mean more and more: because it means all the things that we have gained, and want to keep, and also all the good things that we have lost, and want to regain.[21†] [We want all true goods at once, and to preserve them in equilibrium.

But to preserve such a very delicate balance is very difficult. For at any moment the good and bad are so inextricably mixed, that, as I said above in other words, we are almost forced, with our limited intelligence and vision, to give up some good in order to abolish some evil. The gradual desertion of Christianity is partly accounted for, in Britain at least, by our absorption in discovery and invention; and still more by the economic and social changes induced by discovery and invention. Among these too, there came great benefits; yet moral and religious development has always been in the rear. The lives of little children in the middle ages, being lived mostly in farms and villages, and in their families, were probably more precious and their existence was more tolerable than they became when the factory was introduced. It only dawned gradually upon people in power – and many do not seem to realize it fully even now – that what seemed a good way of making money and a beneficient way of producing a profusion of cheap goods was also a profound alteration and disturbance of spiritual life. They did not even appreciate the fact that it was not helpful to the future of the nation that the children should work for more hours a day, and under more hideous conditions, than could be imposed upon any adult workman to-day.

It is also curious to observe how much of the decline of Christianity has been due to the earnest efforts of pious and zealous people, aiming at the greater happiness, the greater freedom and even the greater piety of the people; and how progressively the result has been merely to make them indifferent to Christianity. At each step of renouncing something that seemed obsolete or false they took a step also away from the permanent and true; and at each step they thought that they were nearer to true Christianity, and finally to true religion in general. There was a great deal, certainly, which it was desirable to give up; a great-grandfather of mine, a simple clergyman in the middle of the eighteenth century, jeopardised his living by suddenly announcing in public that he could no longer believe that the souls of infants dead without baptism would burn in eternal fire.[22] But in the nineteenth century the real history of the popular theology of England is written in its literature and fiction. In the novels of Dickens and Thackeray, Christianity survives, chiefly as the more amiable aspect of the eighteenth-century church; in those of George Eliot, chiefly as an austere moral code, tempered by humanitarianism, divorced from the supernatural faith which would justify it; with Meredith and Hardy it has vanished altogether, and is replaced by uneasy individual groping in the dark.[23]

I am afraid that my talk to-day may have sounded too abstract, and perhaps not coming to any clear point. But at the back of my mind I have always something definite: the strain, the bewilderment and the resentment in the minds of some of those younger people with whom I have had contact. It is not enough just to say that they have no belief; for if you can turn your eyes to the other world, you must all the more, while you are here, want to make this place a fit place for preparation for it, not only for yourself but for others. The supposed conflict between science and religion is no great or necessary part of the difficulty. To get at its essence you have to study the minds of the few rather than those of the many: it is not at Hyde Park that we should look, but at those who might appear to the world to have no reason for discontent, and who are yet dissatisfied.]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 5 p.m. on Sunday, 13 Mar, by BBC radio as the second of TSE's four talks on "The Modern Dilemma." Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archive Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets.

2. The Mad Hatter's riddle without an answer posed to Alice at "A Mad Tea-Party," chapter 7 of Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (New York: Sam'l Gabriel Sons, 1918), 35. In his lecture "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry" (1933), TSE discusses Carroll's nonsense verse (4.828).

3. On 9 Jan 1930, TSE wrote to Montgomery Belgion: "people are perhaps more affected by propaganda since the word itself was discovered. . . . I have bothered a good deal about 'classic' and romantic. The trouble there is that the terms change their meaning for every decade you are talking about. And I suspect that your word propaganda, which is fairly new, has the same trouble" (*L5* 27-28).

4. Marx first used the phrase in a series of articles for the *Neue Rheinische Zeitung Revue* in 1850, quoted by Sidney and Beatrice Webb in *Methods of Social Study* (London: Longmans, 1932), 37.

5. Although an Anglican, Bacon was highly critical of the governance of the Church of England in his writings. Descartes claimed to be a devout Roman Catholic. For TSE's critique of Bacon and Descartes from a religious point of view, see "The Genesis of Philosophic Prose: Bacon and Hooker" (3.643) and his anonymous review of Maritain's *Three Reformers* (3.504).

6. TSE refers to Royce's lecture on "The World of Interpretation" collected in *The Problem of Christianity* (1913). At Harvard in 1913-14, TSE attended Royce's graduate seminar in Comparative Methodology, which examined scientific method (1.122).

7. Diderot advances a theory of variation and natural selection in *Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient* ["Letter on the Blind"] (1749). In "The Development of Leibniz's Monadism" (1916), TSE makes note of "the romantic evolutionism of Diderot" (1.460) and states in his second Clark lecture that Diderot "anticipated Darwin" (2.634).

8. In *In Memoriam* (1850), Tennyson gestures toward the writings of the geologist Charles Lyell and to Robert Chambers's (rather than Darwin's) theory of evolution, whereby phylogeny is linked to ontogeny. In "In Memoriam" (1936), TSE elaborates on this point: "Much has been

said of Tennyson's interest in contemporary science, and of the impression of Darwin. *In Memoriam*, in any case, antedates *The Origin of Species* by several years, and the belief in social progress by democracy antedates it by many more; and I suspect that the faith of Tennyson's age in human progress would have been quite as strong even had the discoveries of Darwin been postponed by half a century. And after all there is no logical connection: the belief in progress being current already, the discoveries of Darwin were harnessed to it."

9. TSE owned a copy of Darwin's *The Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection* (London: J. Murray, 1910).

10. In *La Bible enfin expliquée* [*The Bible Finally Explained*] (1776), Voltaire preceded Darwin in attacking the creation story in the book of Genesis.

11. In Charles Dickens's first novel *The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club* (1836-37), Sam Weller, Mr. Pickwick's faithful valet, tells how a pieman of his acquaintance makes meat pies out of all sorts of animals, including kittens.

12. In his Dec 1932 lecture on "The Age of Dryden," TSE drew attention to "the spiritual deterioration in society" between the age of Dryden and Addison (4.620).

13. The phrase "worship false gods" appears in English translations of several passages of the Bible (especially in Corinthians, see 5:10-11, 6:9, 8:7, 10:7, 10:14, 12:12).

14. TSE alludes to Christ's parable of a man whose enemies sowed tares among his wheat. When his servants offer to pull up the tares, the master replies: "Nay, lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather together first the tares and bind them in bundles to burn them, but gather the wheat into my barn" (Matthew 13:29-30).

15. "Don't throw out the baby with the bath water"; derived from a German proverb.

16. *The Mysterious Universe* (1930), an expanded version of Jeans's 1930 Rede Lecture, sold 70,000 copies in its first two months. Eddington's *Science and the Unseen World* (1929) was his 1929 Swarthmore Lecture.

17. TSE apparently recalls Ferdinand Brunetière's famous attack on French intellectuals during the Dreyfus Affair: "je ne vois pas ce qu'un professeur de thibétain a de titres pour gouverner ses semblables" ["I do not see what right a professor of Tibetan has to govern his fellow citizens."] ("Après le process," *La Revue des deux mondes*, 15 Mar 1898, 446). TSE recommends Brunetière's strictures on the failure of modern science to explain away the mysteries of religion in *Syllabus of a Course of Six Lectures on Modern French Literature* (1916) (1.476).

18. In Apr 1914, TSE was introduced to Max Planck's 1900 quantum theory during one of Josiah Royce's graduate seminars. The quantum theory of atomic structure was not fully articulated until the 1920s.

19. On 10 Feb 1930, TSE wrote to Kenneth Codrington: "Two of the great and permanent possibilities of heresy in Christianity have always been: Tritheism vs. Unitarianism, and the Arian controversy ended (so to speak) by Athanasius" (*L5* 93). The Christian theologian Athanasius, Bishop of Alexandria, was a champion of Trinitarianism against Arianism.

20. TSE refers to Ptolemy's geometric model, refuted by Copernicus in the sixteenth century, whereby the sun orbits a stationary earth. In "Thinking in Verse: A Survey of Early Seventeenth-Century Poetry" (1930), TSE remarks: "The important point about the Copernican revolution in astronomy is not that it controverted the official astronomy of the

Church. It is rather that it affirmed the standing of a separate science in which the laity might be more competent, because more specialised, than the Church" (4.48).

21†. The text of the *Listener* article ends here.

22. Rev. Andrew Eliot (1718-78), Harvard-educated minister of the Congregational New North Church in Boston from 1742 to 1778. TSE likely read of his forefather's stand on baptism in Ephraim Eliot's pamphlet, *Historical Notices of the New North Religious Society in the Town of Boston with Anecdotes of the Reverend Andrew and John Eliot* (1822). In 1767, he received, by purchase, the Doctor of Sacred Theology degree from the University of Edinburgh and served as a fellow of Harvard College from 1765 until his death. In 1773, he refused his election to the presidency of Harvard because he was unwilling to leave his congregation.

23. TSE addresses the intellectual background of these novelists in *A Course of Twenty-Five Lectures on Victorian Literature* (1917) (1.587) and in more depth in Feb 1933 in his tutorial class at Harvard, "English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present day" (4.758).

The Search for Moral Sanction

The Listener, 7 (30 Mar 1932) 445-46, 480[1]

[I have read all the letters which came to me after my first talk. Some showed misunderstandings which I hope are gradually clearing up as I proceed; some tend to cancel each other; I must say that all have been useful to me and I thank you for them. There are one or two points on which there is enough enquiry to make an answer desirable. One correspondent asks me whether the Communist could not say that there was more Christian spirit in Communism than in our present system.[2] I am quite willing to concede that point, for what it is worth, which is nothing at all. I am attacking communism, not defending the present system. That should answer the question of another correspondent who asks whether I think we are living in a Christian or in a Pagan world; my answer is emphatically the latter.[3] But I must point out, about communism, that we must take it as we find it, and as we find it, communism means atheism for anyone who can think straight. That is not only true of Russia but everywhere. If you can invent a "Christian communism," by all means do; but I feel pretty confident that if you succeed it will turn out to be something so different from communism as we know it that there will be no point in calling it "communism" at all. For there is a world of difference between a philosophy which starts with this world and a philosophy which views this world from the point of view, so to speak, of the next. It may seem a paradox, but the Christian wants a better social order just because he believes that the world is transient and secondary. And in Christianity there must always be a residue of Tragedy in this world and its satisfactions. There are very profound implications, in the terrible words: "Not as the world gives, give I unto you."[4]

I tried to suggest, last week, that the progress of science, of physical theory, could only be held responsible for the decline of religious faith in so far as its significance had been misunderstood.[5] It may have diverted human emotions, and made men hold more firmly to what appear certainties of scientific proof than to what appear the unprovable assertions of religion; but even so, it has only concurred with other, more important causes.] I want this week to touch upon the effect of the progress of biological and psychological science upon conduct, and upon the effect of scientific invention upon social life. [I say touch upon, because it is impossible to cover such vast ground thoroughly in the time of half an hour, even had I the detailed knowledge.] First of all, I do not propose to say anything sensational, or to indulge in any rhetoric of denunciation of modern morals; that attitude has already been well exploited in the press. I see no reason for supposing that morals are much worse than they used to be, or that young people are less virtuous than the old were. Manners certainly have improved; and manners are a part of morals. [It is likely that several generations can show a decrease of debauchery, of grossness and general beastliness; the growth of the feeling of humanity and humanitarianism, of social responsibility, has shown itself there. Many changes in social conventions we are sure have been good; some, such as votes for women, have at worst not done much harm.[6] About public and industrial corruption I do not know; the forms vary from one generation to another, but the quantity may always be the same. In short,] There seems to me no reason for worrying about actual conduct or misconduct: what is interesting, for our purpose, is the search for moral sanction, for *reasons* for behaving in one way rather than another, and for teaching one kind of behaviour rather than another, by earnest people who have given up Christian faith, and also by Christians who feel that traditional morality must be in some ways altered by the advance of knowledge. And this is why I wish to touch upon psychology.

Modern psychology or psycho-analysis received its impulse from work at the French school for mental disorders at Nancy, and from the great French psychiatrists Charcot and Ribot and Janet; but French psychology has, for the most part confined itself prudently to the cure of cases, and left the more surprising developments to take place elsewhere.[7] With the successes or failures of the several types of psychology in curing advanced cases of disorder, I am not here concerned. It is only when the psychologists tend to persuade us, first that we are all ill in mind, next that we all need to acquire something of their science in order to understand each other and ourselves, and finally that psychology will supply that guide and rule of conduct which the Christian faith used to give, and still does give to some; it is only when these three assertions appear that the modern dilemma is engaged.

To begin with, I do not deny any of these assertions out and out. Almost none of us, if any, is so "well" as he might be. That is a perfectly Christian truth. There are, I know and believe, unexplored possibilities of physical, mental, and particularly spiritual, development. And therefore psychology, which is interested and which awakens interest in these possibilities, is helpful. And I recognise further, that if you have not the Christian faith, if you are not prepared to live by it to the best of your ability and to study it throughout your life, and if you are serious enough minded to want something to live by, then you must pin your hopes on psychology. For in one aspect, psychology represents a protest against the mere "outwardness" of some modern dilutions of Christianity, especially in Protestant countries. To maintain certain periodic observances, to attend church regularly on Sundays, taking a "sitting" as it is called, or if prosperous enough a whole pew, to give reasonably to a selected number of trustworthy charities, and to obey some decalogue of prohibitions; that used to represent, in English-speaking countries, the whole duty of a Christian, except to be industrious and make as much money as possible. Now the human spirit does rebel against anything so arid, and forgets, or does not know, that that against which it is rebelling is only a mutilated part of true Christianity. It is right and important that people should investigate their own minds; that they should be fearless in searching out, and confessing (if only to themselves) their hidden desires and motives, and that they should use this knowledge for self-improvement.

Psychology, in short, has very great utility in two ways. It can revive, and has already to some extent revived, truths long since known to Christianity, but mostly forgotten and ignored, and it can put them in a form and a language understandable by modern people to whom the language of Christianity is not only dead but undecipherable. (It is a mistake to suppose that people understand ideas best when they are put most simply; they understand them best when they are put in the language they are familiar with, even if it is the language of Hollywood.) But I must add that I think psychology can do more than this, in discovering more about the human soul still; for I do not pretend that there is nothing more to know; the possibilities of knowledge are practically endless. Psychology is an indispensable handmaid to theology; but, I think a very poor housekeeper. And it is unfortunate that so many eminent psychologists of our day have been either indifferent or hostile to Christianity, and in either case not very well acquainted with it; and that they have deliberately tried to do without it.

I will mention two bad effects of psychology at its present stage. For the first, I can give a concrete example. A priest of my acquaintance, who was for a time chaplain in a prison, told me of a woman there who reappeared again and again, a few months after serving her sentence, for odds and ends of petty thefts and misdeeds, all of a trifling nature.[8] When he tried to reason with her and show her that this line of conduct was wasteful and unprofitable, she replied with complacency and even pride, that she had been carefully examined by a doctor, who had told her that she had a "complex" which made her do these things. She spoke of a "complex" as if it had been a guardian angel; and indeed it did more for her than a guardian angel, because it absolved her from all responsibility and gave her a sense of dignity and importance. This is an extreme case, and may sound like a parody. But it does indicate the danger of the "deterministic" tendency of some psychology. Determinism means here simply: "I am not responsible for being what I am; when I was a small child something happened to me which caused all the trouble; my parents were the guilty parties then, and society in general is the guilty party now."[9]

Now "determinism" is all very well as a guiding principle for the scientist in his researches; but beyond a point it won't work – like most other non-Christian principles. And this encouragement of irresponsibility is related to another menace of modern psychology: a tendency to accept as the most real emotions those which are, or which may be, the most primitive. One school emphasises, or did at one time, sexual desire; and with its Oedipus complex introduced Original Sin in an original form.[10] (To have to deal with Original Sin when you don't believe that there is such a thing as sin is rather a problem.)[11] Now so far as it went, this was a good thing. To know oneself, that is good, and it is a lesson in humility to learn how primitive we are. "Liberation," so far as it means complete self-knowledge, is a good thing; but it does not follow that all of our suppressed desires should he satisfied, and to talk of sublimating them is to put things upside down. "Sublimation" in effect means, I think, just substitution; and there is no substitute for anything.[12] It means, in simple language, something like this: Suppose that my trouble is diagnosed as a suppressed craving for caviare. Well, that's something, to know what the cause of the trouble is. But I have not the money to buy enough caviare to satisfy the craving. I can, however, cultivate a taste for playing the flute or cross-country running. But in my own experience I have never been able to deal with any of my low appetites or vulgar tastes in this way. I have perceived their transience, their unsatisfactoriness, and the horror of satiety which is far beyond the famine of deprivation; but I have never known a desire to be expelled by anything but another desire. And psychology seems to me for the most part to ignore the more intense, profound and satisfying emotions of religion. It must ignore their value, because its function is merely to describe and not to express preference. But if this is true, it can never take the place of religion, though it can be an important accessory.

[I am far from asserting that it would have been better for the development of contemporary psychology had its researches, or its tentative conclusions, been controlled by the Church; it is probably very much better that it has been free to go its own way, make its own discoveries and its own mistakes. But a science of such indefinite limits, which has been so largely developed by men outside of any church, is likely to tend, as psychology has, to usurp the functions of theology.] With certain psychological theories I am strongly in sympathy, because they seem to me to be fundamentally Christian; but for anything but religion – supernatural religion – to take the place of religion is highly dangerous. It is the same tendency as we have found in communism (and in the political field there is more excuse for it) and we find it also in the science of eugenics: the pursuit of the mirage of the Earthly Paradise – the illusion that we can be made happy and perfect by the application of legislation or force of the results of scientific discovery. Now eugenics, we must all agree, has already done a great deal for our material well-being: it has helped to provide us with a number of perfect animals and plants for various purposes, it has made wheat grow in climates where no wheat grew before, and so forth. Furthermore, it will have, we hope, when more highly developed, much to teach us about the breeding of human beings. It can help us to deal better with those unfortunate members of the community who ought not to breed at all[; it may even revise, to some limited extent, the Christian views of degrees of relationship in marriage.[13]] But I think the hopes of some eugenists have been set too high, and some have advocated what many of us regard as very dubious short cuts to the improvement of the race. A few remarks will suffice. When we breed animals we know exactly what we want; the specialist in such matters has a pretty clear notion of his "perfect" bull or pig or ear of corn: but what *is* our idea of the perfect human being? We can at best hope to arrest the propagation of characters universally recognised as undesirable. And even so, at least one eminent biologist holds that the proportion of feeble-minded persons who are the offspring of feeble-minded parents is very small indeed, and that every one of us has, so to speak, elements of imbecility in us, as well as of other undesirable characters, which may combine with similar elements in the other parent.[14] But what is most obvious is the danger of the methods of improving the race advocated by some of those who are wholly emancipated from Christian morality.

It is, however, not only natural, but right, that when people have ceased to hold any Christian faith they should begin to question Christian morality; and I think it extremely difficult, if not rationally impossible, for any unbeliever who can think intelligently and independently, for himself to remain attached to Christian morals. I am sure that I could not. But the mind does really abhor disorder; men and women must seek for some sanction for their behaviour; and when they no longer seek to act in accordance with a divine will, they must seek to act in accordance at least with some scientific law. It is so easy, too, to believe that the restrictions of Christianity are merely a barrier to happiness and a cause of misery; so easy, so natural, when we have some particular case of such before our eyes. And in the end society has given up some greater good, which it could not appreciate while it had it, for some lesser good which turns out, when divorced from the greater, to be no good at all. Without the love of God there is no love at all. And so, finally, science lets you down.

There is certainly one department of science which most people will agree has let us down. I mean that of mechanical invention. It has even become a bogey employed to make our flesh creep: witness Mr. Aldous Huxley's latest novel *Brave New World* and some of the gloomy predictions of Lord Russell.[15] Time was when every important invention was hailed almost like the arrival of a Messiah; when we could be cheerfully assured that all the workmen displaced by machines could be found work again somehow by the very machinery which was taking their place. The obvious menaces of scientific invention are two. One is the social danger of machinery of comfort and pleasure to the consumer. There is the danger of mechanised pleasure – pleasure which gives the enjoyer less and less trouble to procure, and which requires less and less co-operation on his part, pleasure which can be enjoyed passively and stupidly. I do not know how much pleasure is enjoyed by the man who drives a car the machinery of which he understands no better than he does his own stomach, in a stream of similar cars along a monotonous road on a Sunday afternoon. But one effect of the motorcar has been to facilitate a tendency already discernible. Just as the centre of human life is the family, so the social unit is the village. One characteristic of London which makes it, to me, preferable to any other metropolis in the world that I know, is that it is still to a great extent, a collection of villages the borders of which touch, each retaining a local character of its own. Do not reply that a number of the London villages I have in mind are scandalously filthy and ought to be torn down; I know that quite well, and I am not simply indulging a taste for the picturesque slum. But when I see the tendency for the village to be replaced, not by the suburb, for which there is much to be said, but by an endless line of houses along a ribbon road over which passes a ceaseless stream of cars, I wonder what sort of organic unity can be left, what sort of local patriotism and activity fostered.[16]

But from the point of view of the producer the situation is still more pernicious. It is now a commonplace of economics, apprehensible by the dullest of us, that the more machines you have, the more destitution you will get.[17] The more easily and cheaply goods can be produced, the less manual labour required, the fewer people there are who can buy them, because they have not the money which can only be got by working. But the weavers who wanted to destroy the looms were right only in a wrong condition of society.[18] I do not want to see machinery destroyed but only to repeat that a machine age requires a fresh economic theory, and a fresh economic theory requires a fresh viewpoint in morals, and a fresh viewpoint in morals must get back to the foundations of morals. The old law said that those who *will* not work shall not eat;[19] but it has no application to those who cannot, who have not the opportunity to work. Note that the very word "work" has altered its meaning in an industrial society. Truly, for me, "work" means work primarily for the benefit of others and for the community as a whole; and such work includes giving pleasure or amusement to others. Nowadays "work" means rather making money; either a little money by tending a machine, or more money by manipulating money. With such a doctrine of work, you will have, as the chief alternative, idleness; where the alternative should be *leisure*.[20] And in the present state of society, we have an extraordinary muddle of social and moral values. There are those still who feel socially, and therefore morally, superior because they do not have to work: that is, because they are on a dole provided for them by the work or by the good luck of their fathers and grandfathers. There are others who denounce such members of society, with great moral indignation, as parasites. Both points of view are wrong: there is no difference whatever between those who live on the income provided by their ancestors and those who live on the income provided by the State. They are all useful members of the community in so far as they can consume what the workers produce; the trouble is that they cannot, among the lot of them, consume enough, because they have not the money to pay for it; and as things are, the money is not there to give them.

One effect of industrialisation is that many of those who have work must work too hard or too long, and most of those who have no work must be idle. It is obvious that the machine must be neither abolished nor prevented from further development and improvement, but controlled. I do not say that there is too much machinery; and perhaps before we reach that point we shall be too poor to build more. But we need to ask the question: What is machinery for? Perhaps we have too much for some purposes and too little for others. In some ways machinery degrades taste and sets up unnatural values. Of the majority of people who could afford either a motor-car or a really fine painting (I assume that neither is a necessity), how many would choose the painting? A motor-car is a greater help in keeping up appearances with one's neighbours than an oil painting is.[21] And machine-making is an industry with which art cannot compete: for the maker of machinery finds himself obliged to make as many machines as possible, not because they are needed, but to keep the factory going. Thus we make machines to sell abroad to people who will use them in order to make for themselves things which they used to import from us!

Such instances could be accumulated indefinitely. Do not suppose that I think I have made any discovery, or that I pretend to be saying anything new: I am merely repeating what cannot be repeated too often. We have to-day a system, or lack of system, which Christianity cannot possibly accept. And we need a kind of economics which will ask the question: Why? What is it good to do? And to answer this question we must find out what is the meaning of "Good."

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 5 p.m. on Sunday 20 Mar by BBC radio as TSE's third talk in a series entitled "The Modern Dilemma." Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archive Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets.

2. The correspondent was the Christian sociologist Maurice Reckitt, editor of *The Church Socialist* and a member of the Research Committee of the Christian Social Council.

3. On 20 Oct 1931, TSE complained to John Middleton Murry about "the general state of paganism in this country" (*L5* 696-97). In a letter to the editor of the *New English Weekly* (24 Jan 1940), he declared: "I am not obstinately attached to the term 'pagan,' as the alternative to 'Christian.' I shall be glad if anyone can tell me of a better: I wanted to avoid, as far as I could, using (or rather abusing) the term 'secular.'"

4. John 14:27: "Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you."

5. See the previous lecture in this series: "Religion and Science: A Phantom Dilemma" (4.436).

6. TSE discusses the consequences of the 1928 Representation of the People Act, which extended the franchise to women over the age of twenty-one, in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Jan 1931 (4.213).

7. The "Nancy School" was a school of psychotherapy (employing suggestion-therapeutics and hypnotism) founded by Ambroise-Auguste Liébeault in Nancy, France, in 1866. Freud visited the Nancy school in 1889, although he also studied with the rival Paris school established by the French neurologist and psychologist Jean-Martin Charcot (1825-1893). TSE discussed Janet's work in his graduate essays at Harvard and in his doctoral thesis (1.64, n.5; 1.334).

8. Probably Rev. Desmond Morse-Boycott (1893-1979), curate at St. Mary's Church, Somers Town, in central London, journalist and author of *Ten Years in a London Slum* (1929). TSE had communicated with him since Jan 1930, informing Kenneth Ingram that "he is doing good work in a slum parish" (*L5* 213). The two then worked together on the Anglo-Catholic Congress of June 1930 (*L5* 220-21).

9. In the traditional philosophical debate over the existence of "free will," a central question in theology, "determinism" is the proposition that every event has a cause, implying that all events are predictable, given the previous conditions and laws of nature.

10. In the revised edition of *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* (1915), Freud proposes the psychoanalytic theory of the Oedipus complex in which the child's love of his mother brings him into unconscious conflict with his father.

11. On 9 June 1932, TSE wrote to Stephen Spender: "What really matters is not what I think about the Church today, or about Capitalism, or military processions, or about Communism: what matters is whether I believe in Original Sin."

12. In his essay "Civilized Sexual Morals" (1908), Freud identifies sublimation as a mechanism by which humans channel instincts of sexuality and aggression into civilized activity (including artistic, cultural, and intellectual pursuits).

13. In the Canon law of the Catholic Church the degree of relationship is calculated by counting back to a common ancestor. Those more closely related than fourth cousins need a dispensation to marry.

14. On 8 Apr 1931, TSE wrote to the anthropologist George Henry Lane-Fox Pitt-Rivers on behalf of Faber to decline publication of his essay advocating eugenics, but to say that it raises the following questions: "what qualities are desirable or not to breed for? and as not all good qualities can co-exist in the same individual, how are they to be distributed? is there no danger, in eliminating the unfit, of eliminating the exceptional genius as well, and reducing mankind to uniformity? is it possible at the present stage to discriminate with certainty between true Eugenics and false?" (*L5* 539). In 1931, a Private Member's Bill seeking to legalize voluntary sterilization of those persons with mental retardation was defeated in the House of Commons. The "eminent biologist" TSE refers to is Julian Huxley, who drew attention to the recessive nature of certain genes associated with mental deficiency in his paper "The Vital Importance of Eugenics" (1933).

15. Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1932) presents a satire of contemporary notions of scientific progress and modernization, in which babies are produced on mass-production lines

and society is governed by a conformist diet of mass entertainment. Bertrand Russell's BBC broadcast "How Science Has Changed Society" warned: "The society of the future, assuming that we can escape a cataclysm, will be more and more a thing deliberately planned rather than a spontaneous natural growth. But in this deliberate planning there are dangers which it would not be wise to underestimate. . . . If the organisers think only of mechanism, they may seek to produce soulless individuals all exactly alike, who will be convenient to the statistician and to the administrator because it will not be necessary to distinguish between one and another" *Listener*, 7 (13 Jan 1932), 40.

16. On 7 Mar 1931, TSE complained to A. L. Rowse that by the mass production of cars "it seems to me that we build up, by accident, great industries employing great numbers of men, for objects which are *morally* indefensible: example, the Morris industry at Cowley. Then we have got all these men busied in turning out products which we ought not to want to turn out, and we become morally responsible for putting the rest of the population in the morally undesirable position of being able to own motor cars because owing to the motor car industry they have to live in places in which [they] couldn't live unless they had motor cars" (*L5* 507-08). The choruses from *The Rock* (1934) contain the observation: "And now you live dispersed on ribbon roads, / And no man knows or cares who is his neighbour / Unless his neighbour makes too much disturbance, / But all dash to and fro in motor cars, / Familiar with the roads and settled nowhere" (*CPP* 152).

17. Russell's broadcast "How Science Has Changed the World" makes this point: "The increased productivity of labour resulting from modern technique ought to have brought wealth for employers and full wages, with shorter hours, for wage-earners; instead it has resulted in bankruptcy for many employers, and unemployment for millions of wage-earners" (39).

18. During the Industrial Revolution, hand-looms and manual weavers were replaced by mechanized power-looms located in factories. Facing economic exploitation, the Luddites of the East Midlands and Yorkshire smashed their machines in 1811-13.

19. II Thessalonians 3:10: "For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would not work, neither should he eat."

20. TSE's growing interest in the relation between leisure and culture is elaborated at length in his 1952 introduction to Josef Pieper's *Leisure: The Basis of Culture*.

21. The Eliots owned an Austin Morris Minor in 1932.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 11 (Apr 1932) 467-73

I have again been reading a number of small books, pamphlets and articles of a "revolutionary" nature; I find that younger people with whom I talk have, not exactly revolutionary ideas, but rather a yearning towards revolutionary ideas of some kind. Indeed, those who prefer things to be much as they are, including practising politicians in and out of power, and Fabians, may take comfort from the multiplicity of revolutions which seem to cancel each other.[1] But what chiefly interests me at the moment is the general interest, not so much in economics, as in what Péguy would have called *la mystique* of economics; the mixture, which may easily be a muddle, of economic theory, humanitarian enthusiasm, and religious fervour.[2] That is the subject of the present note.

Sympathy with communism seems to me to have three important elements: observed facts, respect for what appears to be the most or even the only "scientific" theory about them, and pleasurable emotions of a religious type. These elements fortify each other to a very high degree, and are with difficulty distinguished. About certain very serious facts no one can dissent. The present system does not work properly, and more and more people are inclined to believe both that it never did and that it never will; and it is obviously neither scientific nor religious. It is imperfectly adapted to every purpose except that of making money; and even for money-making it does not work very well, for its rewards are neither conducive to social justice nor even proportioned to intellectual ability. It is well adapted to speculation and usury, which are the lowest forms of mental activity; and it rewards well those who can cozen and corrupt the crowd. Dislike of disorder unites with humanitarian zeal to inflame discontent: and humanitarian zeal when uncontrolled by the discipline of an exact religious faith, is always dangerous and sometimes pernicious. Secondly, no one who is seriously concerned can fail to be impressed by the work of Karl Marx.[3] He is, of course, much more cited than read; but his power is so great, and his analysis so profound, that it must be very difficult for anyone who reads him without prejudice on the one hand, or without any definite religious faith on the other, to avoid accepting his conclusions.[4]

But those who are in this way converted to Marxism must also become converts to the religion to which it has given rise; it is the absence of the religious fervour, the complete gentility, which makes the Fabians look to-day so antique.[5] And it is exactly in its religious development that Communism seems to me to collapse and to become something both ludicrous and repulsive. The Theology (so to speak) of Communism is still, I suppose, but imperfectly expounded; and so I am happy to see as a recruit so accomplished a theologian as Mr. Middleton Murry. Anyone who has followed attentively the progress of Mr. Murry's theological writings cannot fail to be struck by the inevitability of his present position.[6] It was Mr. Murry who first perceived the extraordinary resemblance between Jesus Christ and D. H. Lawrence; and it was Mr. Murry who first assigned to Judas Iscariot, with sympathy and comprehension, his proper role in the drama.[7] It was obvious from Mr. Murry's next book that God Himself was under notice to quit; and it is only with relief that we observe that He has finally vacated Mr. Murry's premises.[8] And at least as early as January of 1929 Mr. Murry showed himself warmly in sympathy with other developments necessary for the emergence of the New Humanity.[9] Writing in *The Forum* in that month, with his colleague, Dr. James Carruthers Young, Mr. Murry exclaims:

> It is, indeed, simply untrue that a greater freedom in "experimental" relations would cheapen marriage. On the contrary, it would help to make marriage more precious, more satisfying, and more permanent. The dogma of original sin still warps our sense of psychological realities. The realities are, first, that men and women do, very ardently, desire to find a companion for life.[10]

And so on. One must admire the skill with which Mr. Murry, here, as elsewhere, envelops every utterance with his familiar odour of sanctity; not even the dearest of old ladies could be upset by such sentiments, Mr. Murry puts things so nicely. But "men and women do, very ardently, desire to find a companion for life": I wonder. Don't a good many of them show an ardent desire for variety? But Mr. Murry perhaps knows human nature better than I do; or if human nature isn't like that, Communism will teach us how to change it.

I am not yet quite convinced that Mr. Murry can be accepted as an accredited exponent of the Communist religion. He is, to my mind, suspiciously patronizing towards his comrades in the faith; and Leninism is all very well in Russia, but won't do in England; and Lenin did not understand Marx so well as Mr. Murry does, anyway.[11] I quite agree with Mr. Murry about the profound differences between the Russian and the Western European situations; but to me Russian Communism seems merely an attempt to catch up with Western Capitalism, and to imitate some of what are to me its most objectionable habits.[12] In any case, I doubt whether Mr. Murry, with his taste for summary evictions, will find Lenin and Stalin as easy to turn out as God the Father.[13]

According to not only Mr. Murry, but other exponents, Communism is going, in some way, to tap an inexhaustible reservoir of human emotion upon which we have never before drawn. In Mr. Murry's poetic diction – again modulated to the old ladies' ears – "the love of man for man need beat itself against the bars no more."[14] A hundred and fifty years ago this love would have aroused a frenzy of enthusiasm under the name of *fraternité*; but our palates have become so jaded, partly from our seeing that word so often on French public buildings, that we need more elaborate food.[15] And at this juncture it is always the goddess Psychology who comes to the aid of new-fledged religions. To be convinced, we must now be told that we are suffering from a collective neurosis: a disease from which we all suffer together, though individually we may remain in apparent health.[16]

The mystical belief in herd-feeling, which had been elevated to a pseudo-science under such names as "social psychology," is one of the most disquieting superstitions of the day.[17] To the honest freethinker, the heir of eighteenth-century enlightenment, it must seem a deliberate repudiation of civilization and its responsibilities; to the Christian it must appear a travesty of all that in which he believes. It is apparent in extreme Nationalism, as well as in Communism; and indeed the two do not seem very far apart; even Mr. Murry's variety tends to assume a form of British Jingoism.[18] It is a symptom of weakness, but the weakness is only in part pathological; for the rest it is just the essential feebleness and impotence of the individual man which Christianity has always recognized. And being a symptom of weakness, it is also a source of strength; both the fugitive strength of a violent stimulant and the permanent strength of true communion. The craving for some passionate *conviction*, and for a living organic society, assumes odd and often extremely dangerous forms.[19] Man must have something to which he is ready to sacrifice himself; he must, if necessary, sacrifice himself, but he must not be sacrificed. I question whether Communism would leave the individual in possession of enough of himself to sacrifice. Where the willingness towards self-sacrifice is deficient, as in any large indifference to "patriotism," it is usually that men as individuals do not feel that they are being called upon to sacrifice themselves for anything in which they have an essential interest, but are merely being sacrificed to alien interests: and when I say "interests," I do not mean only material interests, but ideal interests without which the man feels that he would be less himself.[20] But what, I wonder, is this mass-identity into which our individual consciousnesses are to be merged? Admitted that the ordinary mediocre man maintains his petty and not wholly real individuality by subterfuges and expedients: by money, social position, public distinctions, skill at games and other irrelevances that distinguishes him from his neighbour. The Buddhist may become merged in nirvana; but that is a voluntary extinction, accomplished by the most arduous self-discipline, not a salvation from individuality imposed upon him by society.

One great test of a society is the kind of art it produces. Art in its highest development, both in Europe and in Asia, can hardly exist without a sense of individuality, a sense of tragedy, for which Communism does not seem to leave room. There must be many people like myself, who can be more quickly and completely convinced of the justification of Communism, or of any new form of society, when we are convinced by art instead of philosophizing. It is perhaps premature to judge of Russia until a generation has grown to maturity which has never known any condition but settled Bolshevism. I am, unfortunately, incapable of being convinced by the arts of the cinema; though I am willing to admit that a comparison of Russian films with American films somewhat favours the former.[21] In Britain, certainly, Communist art is in a bad way. This is not merely my own view, but that of Comrade Harold Heslop, expressed at the Second International Conference of the Revolutionary Writers. Here are his words, taken from a most interesting periodical, *Literature of the World Revolution* (Kniga, Ltd., Bush House: one shilling):

> It must be recognized, that proletarian art in Great Britain is in a very backward condition – and is in fact hardly begun. In order to illustrate this, allow me to say that, during the five years of life of the proletarian Sunday newspaper – the *Sunday Worker* – the scarcity of short stories from the pens of proletarians was most pronounced.[22]

There is, however, another side to the picture, to which we must draw attention in fairness and with warm sympathy:

> Modern British bourgeois literature has sunk to a depth that is truly astonishing. It has reached a level of rottenness that can only be described as positively nauseating. It is the literature of dead people. It betokens the final phase of dying capitalism. Perhaps it would be better not to weary the comrades with any lengthy analysis. [226]

Those sentences are well worth pondering. But again:

> Of recent years other writers have sprung up among the proletariat. Of these James C. Welsh, John S. Clarke, and Joe Corrie might be cited as examples. . . . The great disappointment is Joe Corrie.[23]

But for himself Comrade Heslop has hope:

> I make bold to say that my association with you, my stay in Soviet Russia (and) my friendship with my critical friend Ellis have put me on the path towards the creation of real proletarian art.[24] [227]

It is a relief to turn from Mr. Murry and Mr. Heslop to Mr. W. T. Symons, whose book *The Coming of Community* (Daniel: 7s. 6d. net) has not long been published. The book itself is rather a disappointment, because it is a miscellaneous collection of short papers previously published, chiefly in *The New Age*.[25] But at the expense of considerable picking and choosing one can find much matter which is very well worth the trouble. In part, the book is simply a restatement of economic theories of Major Douglas, with an extra dose of enthusiasm; in part it expresses the more emotional, or even religious conclusions of the author himself; at times the style strikes me as a little too corybantic.[26] And I doubt whether I should draw so much sustenance from Adler's psychology, if I knew it as well as Mr. Symons, as he seems to do.[27] But the chief use of psychology (apart from curing people, if it does) seems to me to be to restate old truths in modern jargon which people can understand; and if psychology helps people towards truth which they cannot apprehend when put in simple theological language, so much the better.[28] Mr. Symons believes that the reforms which he advocates

> would inaugurate an altogether new type of society, which would give fullest scope, both to the individual – thus securing the utmost variety in human affairs, and to the social whole – thus stimulating the rich, collective activities, which would surely come to life in a society free to express its invention, its mechanical skill, its sense of the earth in agri-

> culture and crafts, its delightful capacity for play, and its unknown psychic gifts. [8]

I dispute the "*altogether* new type of society": but perhaps Mr. Symons does not intend such a complete severance from the past as his words might imply; and as he is not a Communist, I give him the benefit of the doubt.[29] And I should keep a wary eye on the exploitation of "unknown psychic gifts"; though there are psychic gifts (if one likes that phrase) once known and now mostly neglected. But otherwise, his sentence can surely not be questioned.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. TSE was engaged in a private correspondence about the value of Communism with the young poet Stephen Spender. Spender's objections to TSE's reflections on the topic of "Christianity and Communism" are quoted (anonymously) by TSE in "Building Up the Christian World" (4.467-68). The *Criterion* contributor, A. L. Morton, was another of the "younger people" with whom TSE discussed revolutionary politics at this time.

2. Péguy wrote that "Tout commence en mystique et tout finit en politique" ("Everything begins in mysticism and ends in politics.") *Notre jeunesse* (Paris: Cahiers de la quinzaine, 1910), 27. In "Charles Péguy" (1916), TSE declared that "Péguy represented something which was real and solid. He stood for a real re-creation, a return to the sources, the peasant soil" (1:485).

3. In "Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse" (1929), TSE states: "I have no quarrel with Marx's 'materialistic interpretation' of past history, which is intelligent and within limits very illuminating, but this materialistic interpretation seems to be simply incompatible with *desiring* anything" (3.658-59).

4. In a letter of 6 Nov 1931, TSE informed John Middleton Murry: "my actual knowledge of Marxism is indirect and inaccurate, and I suppose I ought to read *Das Kapital*" (*L5* 728).

5. TSE wrote to Douglas Jerrold on 12 Feb 1932: "Fabianism, in other words, is no longer of the slightest account. Marx and his German and Russian disciples are infinitely more serious and important people." TSE discusses the latest edition of *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (1930) in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1931 (4.305).

6. TSE refers to the opinions expressed in Murry's *The Necessity of Communism* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1932).

7. In *God: Being an Introduction to the Science of Metabiology*, Murry asserts that Lawrence "is very like a great prophet in the continuity of Jesus, with a message essentially the same and with a comparable power of dynamic utterance" (264) and that "Perhaps the truest [disciple] was Judas, who may have believed that Jesus *might* become the Messiah, and may have helped him to his sacrificial death" (65). TSE outlines his objections to Murry's "metabiology" in his review of *God* (4.7).

8. Murry writes: "What is demanded of the conscious minority is a positive and dynamic rejection of religion" (*Necessity of Communism*, 47).

9. TSE discusses Murry's relation to the American "New Humanism" in his review of Lawrence Hyde's *The Prospects of Humanism* (1931) (4.300).

10. John Middleton Murry and Dr. James Carruthers Young, "Modern Marriage," *The Forum*, 81 (Jan 1929), 25.

11. Murry contends that Marx himself "would have been astonished at the crudity of Lenin's *Materialism and Empirio-Criticism*" (*Necessity of Communism*, 15). In spite of his own reservations about the influence of Lenin, TSE published Hugh MacDiarmid's "Second Hymn to Lenin" in the *Criterion*, 11 (July 1932), 593-98.

12. Murry warns his British readers against Russian Communism: "an alien derivation of the idea of Communism is fatal, to Communists, to this nation, and to the world" (*Necessity of Communism*, 9).

13. Murry does not discuss Josef Stalin (1879-1953), since 1923 leader of the Soviet Union.

14. Murry, "Communism or Humanism. An Anglo-German Debate: I. The Necessity of Communism," *The Living Age*, 342 (Apr 1932), 152; reprinted from "The Necessity of Communism," *Adelphi*, 3 (Feb 1932), 267.

15. "Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité": French for "liberty, equality, fraternity (brotherhood)" was institutionalized as the national motto of France at the end of the nineteenth century and is found on many public buildings in France.

16. TSE attacks the attempt to rationalize religious belief as a form of collective neurosis in "Freud's Illusions" (1928) (3.551).

17. William McDougall advances a psychological interpretation of religious experience in *An Introduction to Social Psychology* (1908). TSE studied with McDougall at Oxford in 1915.

18. For example, Murry asserts: "The only remedy against Russian Communism in this country is English Communism" (*Necessity of Communism*, 14).

19. In a letter to Bonamy Dobrée of 13 Sept 1930, TSE remarks: "Herbert [Read]'s danger I think is industry, just as mine is torpor. The line I shall take is to try to suggest that he should write about something with passionate conviction – whether he is right or wrong won't matter so much!" (*L5* 317).

20. In a chapter entitled "The Religion of Communism," Murry declares: "For what is the matter with us, as individuals, to-day is simply this: that no-one dares to demand sacrifice enough from us" (*Necessity of Communism*, 119). In "Religion and Science: A Phantom Dilemma" (1932), TSE asserts: "To sum up: anything which requires genuine self-sacrifice tends toward a religion" (4.437).

21. TSE published an article by the avant-garde Russian filmmaker and theorist Vsevolod Pudovkin in the *Criterion*, 13 (Oct 1933), 1-6.

22. "Sessions Speeches: Session 13-XI-1930 Morning Session," *Literature of the World Revolution*, Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers. Special Number 1931 (Moscow: State Publishing House, 1931), 226. Harold Heslop (1898-1983), novelist, coal miner, Communist, and author of *Red Earth* (1931), a novel about a successful revolution in Britain (not published in the United Kingdom). Heslop had a wide readership in the Soviet Union and was the only British writer invited to speak at the Second International Conference of Revolutionary and Proletarian Writers in Kharkov (modern Ukraine) on 15 Nov 1930. The *Sunday Worker*, founded by the Communist Party of Great Britain, was published from 1925 until 1929. It was replaced by the *Daily Worker* in 1930.

23. James C. Welsh (1880-1954), novelist, Scottish miner, and Labour Party MP for Coatbridge 1922-1931, was the author of *The Morlocks* (1924), which depicts a failed revolution in Britain. John Smith Clarke (1885-1959), editor of the *Socialist* and Independent Labour Party MP for Glasgow Maryhill 1929-1931, was the author of a sympathetic account of his visit to Soviet Union, *Pen Pictures of Russia under the "Red Terror"* (1921). Joseph Corrie (1894-1968), Scottish coal miner, poet, playwright, and author of the three-act play *In Time o' Strife* (1927), set during the 1926 General Strike. TSE made a selection of Corrie's poems for the Porpoise Press, published as *The Image o' God, and Other Poems* (1937). On 28 Feb 1948, TSE referred to Corrie in a letter to Geoffrey Faber as "our old friend."

24. Welsh coalminer and Communist journalist Bob Ellis (1897-1958) accompanied Heslop to the Second International Conference of Revolutionary Writers in 1930. Ellis later collaborated with Heslop on a best seller, *The Abdication of Edward VIII* (1937), published under the pseudonym J. L. White.

25. *The Coming of Community* (London: C. W. Daniel, 1931). W. Travers Symons (1879-1976), contributor to the *New Age* and since 1930 co-editor (with Philip Mairet) of the journal *Purpose*, to which TSE later contributed.

26. Symons dedicates *The Coming of Community* to Douglas "with deepest gratitude for the discovery and description of that within the monetary system which enslaves the World . . . and for laying down the principles upon which the world may be released from thraldom to the artifice of money" (5). Section 3 of *The Coming of Community* is titled "Dithyrambic" in a Nietzschean allusion to the rites of the Corybantes (Phrygian priests) which involved wild and extravagant dances.

27. Symons writes: "It is the glory of the science of Comparative Individual Psychology originated by the genius of Dr. Alfred Adler, of Vienna, that it is the first completely rational explanation of this profound truth . . . that a man is an indivisible totality, acting from one central impulse, and that his totality is in equipoise with the totality of every other man and of all men" (320). Symons claims that Adlerian psychology is compatible with Social Credit economics. In "What Is Modern Psychology?," (1932) TSE criticises Adler's works for infringing "upon the domain of theology" (4.486).

28. In May 1923, TSE complained to Herbert Read that "Psychology is worse than anything because it is a young science (if it is a science) and hardly born before jargonising was well advanced" (*L2* 138-39).

29. Symons says that he was a Socialist until converted to Douglas's Social Credit economics: "it is for the genius of this generation to bring about a communism which makes full application of the Social Credit technique" adding that "I know of no banner but 'communism' under which this revolution may be achieved" (10).

Building Up the Christian World

The Listener, 7 (6 Apr 1932) 501-2[1]

[It may well have seemed to you, that in what I have been saying hitherto, I have done no more than comment on a few of the obvious troubles of our time. Or it may have seemed in spite of any protestations, that I have nothing to propose except a "return" to Christianity; and that those who neither believe nor want to believe had best turn elsewhere. So I have this afternoon the most difficult part of my task: to try to pull the various threads together, and to make impossible, if I can, any misunderstanding of my meaning.

I believe that there is a "modern dilemma" only in the sense that it is particularly modern to be conscious of a dilemma. There is no one tangible cause of our present situation; and there is no one point in the present situation upon which you can put your finger and say: "this is the one thing wrong and this is the way to put everything right." For people differ very much in their opinion as to what is wrong, and therefore it is not surprising that they should differ in their theory of the cause and in their prescriptions of what to do to put things right. It is not even as if we could point, in any department of life, to a steady and unmitigated deterioration. On the contrary, human history shows us such a confused and confusing mixture of good and evil that, as I have said, in every change there are elements of good and evil; every change has two aspects; and people do not even come to universal agreement as to what is good and what is bad; or for the sake of what good it is worth while putting up with that evil. Nevertheless I think we can say that the present situation is the result of diverse and uncoordinated and uncontrolled developments, most of which perhaps are fundamentally good so far as they go, or were the only way of improving matters in their time. The result of concurrent movements has been the movement away from Christianity, which is for me the fundamental evil. I do not deny that in the process we have gained many goods which, human nature being so limited as it is, might never have been won in a Christian society. All the same, we have got to a disorderly condition in which life seems to have lost all meaning and value. It is the despair of this condition which Communism sets out to cure. It seems to me that the cure is worse than the disease; indeed, I take it as a symptom of the disease itself; or if you like, as a temporary stimulant which will turn out in the end to be a narcotic. Communism is the opium of the people.][2]

I have already made it quite clear that I do not propose to cure the world merely by individual conversions. In a plague epidemic, it is good that doctors should save every individual life that they can, but the epidemic is not going to be stopped in that way. In the end it is the individual soul that is the unit of value – and in that, I think, we differ radically from Communism and any other religion of Humanity. Those, by the way, who hold the religion of Communism might do well to study the attempt of a brilliant French freethinker of the nineteenth century, Auguste Comte, to establish a religion of Humanity, and take warning from his ingenious follies.[3] It is the mass of individuals with which we are concerned: not the "mass of humanity," or "the masses," but the mass of individuals, each with his own precious differentiations, his eccentricities and hobbies, his own peculiar way of making the best of life; innumerable individuals, for no two of whom life has quite the same meaning; and no two or more of whom can be really united except in the love of God.[4] The Christian view of society is, if you like, a paradox, for it is an organism in which each part has an equal value to the whole; but out of this paradox you can escape only into anarchism on the one hand, or the opposite heresy, communism, on the other. And that gives you a further paradox; for anarchism and communism respectively, in suppressing half of the value of life, suppress the whole.[5]

I conceive then, not of conversions one by one to the faith, but of a kind of mass-conversion – by which I mean just the opposite of what is meant by a revival or a mass-meeting. In this mass-conversion you start at the other end, because you do not hope to convert the world to complete Christianity, but cherish the more modest hope that every individual will be a Christian so far as he is anything. Only a Moses could lead the people the whole way, and even to him they cried out, as you would cry too: "*Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh-pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger*."[6] No, the world I have in mind would merely be Christian so far as it was anything. And when I say "the World," I mean the individuals who compose it, and I mean their social life, their economic life, their science, their values in this world. The last thing I want, however, is to revert to any mediaeval or early Christian society. For one thing it is impossible, with all our machinery and all our knowledge; for the other, it is undesirable. Yet I admit that our aim is almost more difficult than the impossible; for it is to try to realise the state of affairs which we should have attained had we gained all the good things we have gained and at the same time kept all the spiritual good that we have lost. And this means that we cannot simply pick and choose, by historical study, the good things out of the dustbin of the past and polish them up as fresh as new. For if we had kept them then, they would have been living in us; in, that is, our ancestors for all the generations between any period we call "the past," and ourselves; they would not be quite the same as what we inspect through the telescope of history. Our task, then, is not antiquarianism; it is just the permanent task of making the permanent truths live in us in our own brief and particular moment of time.

[In the notion, the ideal I may even call it, of a world which shall be Christian so far as it is anything, lies a very profound difference with communism. It implies the freedom of choice, and the freedom to be a very imperfect Christian indeed. It accepts the fact of a world in which the majority of Christians will be very imperfect Christians indeed; it tolerates them and finds a free place for them. I am quite well aware – at least it is mentioned again and again by credible report – that the actual members of the communist party in Russia are a small minority; and I shall be reminded that non-communists are tolerated so long as they show no inclination towards another regime. But at the same time, it appears that the communists hope, by their methods of education, their censorship, their pressure towards the dissolution of family life, to breed the whole nation into communism in a few generations.[7] This method of conversion is more scientific, but just as barbarous, as the forcible methods of Islam in the Middle Ages. Now, you cannot produce a Christian wholly either by forcible conversion or forcible breeding. Those methods have been tried, of course; and are hardly likely to be tried again. Nor are we likely to adopt the methods of the missionary, who, having succeeded by a deception in baptising a whole negro tribe, then laughed at their simplicity in supposing that they were still heathen. The non-Christian would suffer no disabilities in what I mean by a Christian society, from which he does not suffer at present; nor, except in the Church, would any avenue of preferment be closed to him.

My notion differs from that of the missionary whom I have just mentioned, in that I should begin at the other end.] I would have the consequences of Christian thinking – thinking by genuine Christians – in the practical departments of life pursued courageously and offered to the public on their merits. You may be indifferent to Christian belief and dogma, but you do at least want sound economics, sound politics, sound biology and psychology; and as for education, you ought to want either a wholly secular education, or the alternative of sound Christian training, not the poor substitute offered to so many schoolboys. Do not think that I am proposing that clergymen should necessarily be detailed to occupy themselves with these subjects, or that free scientific enquiry should he hindered, or the results mutilated to fit in with orthodoxy. But the Christian – seeing how every science, when there is no religion, tends to become a little religion itself, and feeling, as he must if he is really sincere in his faith, that Christian theology is the science which relates and gives meaning to the several sciences – must try to follow his religion out to the bitter end.

In nothing more than in constitutional theory, or the theory of politics, and in economics, is this need greater. There is a common complaint and one of long standing – I have heard it from the young and recently from correspondents; I even heard it and considered it when I was young myself – the complaint that a Church – or, I should say, Churches – for the grievance includes not only the Church of England, but Rome, Presbyterianism and most sects – which have proved so pliant to various forms of government, and so indifferent to the root causes of social injustice and oppression, are unworthy to speak in the Name of Christ, or, if they are worthy, then Christianity is condemned. And the craving, which exists in nearly all of us, for some religion which shall demand a better society on earth, drives many towards Communism. For even as a perfect organisation of society, without a religion to transfigure it, is destitute of energy, hope and ecstasy, so a perfect religion which has no relation to the affairs of this world, lacks reality. The first thing to do, to convert people in the mass to being "Christians so far as they are anything," is to convince them that the Christian faith really has something to say on these matters on which they are intensely interested; and that at least a few Christians would be prepared to take their stand for a Christian world, however different from actual society that world may turn out to be! To remove, in short, the ancient prejudice that Christianity is, or has become, merely the parasitic supporter of things as they are. I want to quote at this point from a private letter from a young man, who I think has put on paper what many feel:

> It has always seemed to me that the objection to religion is that it provides people with an escape from the organization of society, and from all materialistic problems, and that it also offers them an unreal consolation for material injustices that could be altered, and often too for injustices to other people and to the lower classes of society which would seem intolerable if it were not for this escape into a sentimental dreamland.[8]

He is wrong, of course, in confounding "religion" with the history of the Churches during the last two or three centuries; in assuming that the consolation is unreal; and in refusing to recognise that for the individual, when *he* can do nothing about the injustices to himself or to others, this "escape," as he calls it, is right and proper. I quote him because I think many others feel the same way. He continues:

> All the words you use, 'chastity, humility, austerity,' convey to me (and hundreds of other people like me, I think) the feeling of staying in an old school-room chapel, unheated by a metal stove and doing nothing but be as consciously miserable as possible. All these words are associated too deeply with our education and our childhood.[9]

There, I think, we are up against something very serious: the power of association. It is so difficult to talk to people about things of which they have no knowledge, when they have been made sordidly familiar with the *names* for the things: when they have heard repeated so many words belonging to Christian theology, and have never heard anything of Christian theology itself! I am not nearly so frightened of communism as I am of the "Christianity" that many Englishmen have learnt at school; that Christianity which is merely one of the finishing processes of that over-produced commodity, the gentleman.[10]

So I always want to say to such people: "Because you have never seen real Christianity in theory or in operation, because your early years were enveloped in a Christianity which I can hardly describe as much better than an imposture, an imposture associated with all that was most unpleasant in your early youth – and I am quite well aware how unpleasant early youth can be or how few sensitive men were happy in it – do not suppose that you are in a position to judge the Christian faith. I have more right to judge Marxism on insufficient knowledge than you have to judge Christianity on insufficient knowledge. For I can judge Marxism because I know, from its own evidence, that it is incompatible with that in which I already believe; but you, I am sure, became a Marxist because you previously did not believe in anything. I sympathise with your desire to believe something; but unless you are content to be a mere creature of environment, you are not yet in a position to deny the truths of Christianity. We are all partly creatures of environment, for good or bad, and of heredity and hereditary environment. But consider this. Suppose yourself existing a hundred, or two hundred, or any number of years ahead, and suppose that by that time communism had long since become the established religion, the established government and the established society. Is it not quite likely that if you were to be born into such a period you would be brought up in the same imposture, the same claptrap, the same diluted, adulterated and standardised sentiment, the same parroting of words which have lost their meanings, as afflicted the childhood you remember? The words would be different, because they would come out of communist theology and not out of Christian; but they would give you the same nausea and aversion from communism that you now have from Christianity. I should not like to think that then you would become a Christian, or anything else, simply by reacting from communism as you knew it. I am perfectly aware, in these matters that we have not to do simply with intellectual conviction, but with the whole man and his desires. I dare say that you, and people like you, have no desires, no aspirations, which cannot be fulfilled in a communist society. You will have no doubt your own 'chastity,' your own 'humility' and your own 'austerity,' for which you will use different words, and which will give you different rules of behaviour than mine. If you are in the majority, well for you. But in that event, I only hope that I, and my like, may be allowed to expiate our intransigence quickly with our blood; and in any case I and my like shall expect little sympathy, either from the pagan society into which we and you were born, or from the communist society which you hope to construct. Mr. Middleton Murry, in a little book *The Necessity of Communism*, pictures a gentle advance into communism, which like every programme offered to British voters, involves no violence or great discomfort – 'the inevitability of gradualness' again.[11] We are to leave Egypt, but he assures us that the route will not take us through the desert.[12] The Church – by which I think he has in mind not only our Anglican Church, but all Churches – is to be tolerated, as the persons of retarded development who will continue to patronise the Church will be tolerated. But for my part, I prefer to hope that I shall be untolerated, intolerant and intolerable."

That ends my little piece of parenthetical oratory. But I must add and repeat, for your own benefit, first that I do not wish to be named among the usual antagonists of communism. I have tried to make clear, throughout, that I and any who agree with me are in what is called a "hopeless minority"; we loathe communism and we loathe the world as it is, and if this is the dilemma, if these are the only alternatives, then our strongest objection to communism is that it is a waste of time, of brains, of resources, and a great provocation to still more humbug, to change over from one bad system to another.

At this point you must be prepared for a disappointment. My advantage is that I was prepared from the first for your disappointment, and can perhaps tell you why you must be disappointed. Many of those who have had the patience to hear me out must have been expecting me to produce some nice little recipe for setting things right; and I suspect that half of you have anticipated eagerly the moment when you could say: "So *that's* all it comes to! as if we didn't know that that particular scheme hadn't been refuted long ago!" Of course, I have my own preferences, in the economic and other plans which are offered, but I am not going to tell you what they are.

I have avoided any expression of my views on the importance and significance of the kingship, on the merits of aristocracy and democracy, and many other matters.[13] For I did not wish to complicate and distract my main line of thought by anything not quite vital to the present issue. For you might say: "I object firmly to some of the things in which he believes, and I am therefore inclined to believe that he is wrong in his main thesis." If, for instance, I had been giving elementary instruction in the Christian faith, it would have been a mistake for me to have tied it up with an exposition of the philosophy of the greatest philosophical teacher of the Church, St. Thomas Aquinas. For it might have led you to believe that the whole truth of Christianity depended upon the validity of the philosophy of St. Thomas Aquinas – an impression which, I suspect, some of his modern apologists have sometimes given.[14] Similarly, I am not going to commit my belief in the possibility of a Christian society to any practical scheme put forward at the moment, and still less to any of my own invention. If you want schemes for the nationalisation of the Bank of England, for a currency supported by securities instead of gold, for bi-metallism, for the regulation of imports, for Empire Free Trade, for an Anglo-American or Anglo-Scandinavian hegemony, for the distribution of token money, for the revival of folk-dancing or craftsmanship, for the four-hour day, for the

United States of Europe, for community singing, for autarchy, for marketing boards, for purchasing committees, for scout movements or pilgrimages, you will not get them now.[15] My whole purpose has been to stimulate the belief that a Christian organisation of society is possible, that it is perhaps now more than at any previous time possible; to encourage the search for it and the testing of all offers of reform and revolution by its standards.

If I have left you unsatisfied, I can only say that I have expressed convictions only where really convinced, have expressed only the thoughts which were already in my own mind, have discussed with you only what I had already discussed with myself. I know that many will say, with the leper: "*Are not Abana and Pharpar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel? may I not wash in them and be clean? – So he turned and went away in a rage*."[16] I think also of the words of Pascal, to be recalled even, and perhaps especially, on the day of the Resurrection: "The Christ will be in agony even to the end of the world."[17] For sin and evil-doing we cannot abolish; but we can surely labour towards a social justice in this world which will prepare more souls to share not only here but in the Resurrection.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Broadcast at 5 p.m. on Sunday, 26 Mar, by BBC radio as the fourth and final talk in a series entitled "The Modern Dilemma." Unpublished TS of full text in the BBC Written Archive Centre, Caversham. Passages of the broadcast deleted at publication are restored in square brackets.

2. TSE turns the tables on Karl Marx's famous remark that "Die Religion . . . ist das Opium des Volkes" [religion . . . is the opium of the people] in his introduction to "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*," *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (Paris, 1844). TSE addresses the theme of "Christianity and Communism" at length in the first of this series of broadcast talks on "The Modern Dilemma" (4.422).

3. On 27 Jan 1928, TSE wrote to Charles Whibley to complain of the "preposterous philosophy of Auguste Comte," which advocated a Religion of Humanity to replace traditional Christian worship (*L4* 26).

4. TSE's critique of Comte's positivist philosophy echoes a satirical poem, "The Positivists" (1872), by the Victorian poet and novelist Mortimer Collins (1827-1876): "If you are pious, (mild form of insanity,) / Bow down and worship the mass of humanity, / Other religions are buried in mists; / We're our own gods, say the Positivists."

5. TSE, who discussed anarchist political theory with his friend Herbert Read during the 1930s, summed up his opinion of Read's anarchist associates in a letter to Stephen Spender on 15 Feb 1947: "Anarchism is a big bogey word to describe some very inoffensive and mild liberals: it is however a word calculated to put off nearly everybody below a certain level of intelligence."

6. Exodus 16:3

7. Based in the Soviet Union, the "All-Union Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries" promoted Communist ideology in the West; however, in 1932 reports began to emerge of a severe famine and the methods of misinformation and state censorship employed by the Soviet authorities to suppress news of it. In the early 1930s, TSE had first-hand accounts of the situation in Russia from his meetings with Malcolm Muggeridge at the Garrick Club, who published the satire *Winter in Moscow* in 1934.

8. TSE quotes from Stephen Spender's letter of 18 Mar in which Spender responds to TSE's BBC broadcast on "Christianity and Communism" (4.422). Spender's poem "After They Have Tired," lamenting the indifference of politicians and the Church to the plight of the unemployed, was published in the *Listener* on 16 Mar alongside the text of TSE's broadcast. On 9 June, TSE wrote to Spender: "I can't agree that religion provides such an effective escape as you seem to think. The great majority of people find their escape in easier ways; there are a great many unimaginative, selfish and lazy people who profess to be religious, but a vastly greater number who are not: and the real question seems to me not so much what can be done with the English Church but with the English people. All of the middle classes want to be gentlemen, and being a gentleman is incompatible with holding any strong religious convictions; with the latter, one must at least be prepared sooner or later to commit some ungentlemanly act. And for one person who escapes through religion into a 'sentimental dreamland,' there are thousands who escape by reading novels, by looking at films, or best of all, by driving very fast on land or in air, which makes even dreams unnecessary."

9. This passage of Spender's letter of 18 Mar actually begins: "The point is that all the words you use 'chastity, humility, austerity, discipline' . . . ." On 9 June, TSE replied to Spender: "Do you really suppose that 'chastity, humility, austerity, and discipline,' as I mean them, have anything whatever to do with what is taught in school-room chapel? If people really knew what the words mean, they would lock up or deport anyone who pronounced them."

10. TSE apologized to Spender in his letter of 9 June for not seeking prior permission to quote from Spender's letter of 18 Mar, explaining that: "The temptation was great, as you gave me an exact formulation of an attitude I wanted to deal with; nobody knew who my correspondent was, and I can't see that it would do any harm if they did: but I suppose that a gentleman would ask permission before quoting from any letter in public; and sometimes I suspect that I have come down in the world so far as to have become tainted with the conscience of a gentleman."

11. In his presidential address to the 1923 Labour Party conference, Sidney Webb dissociated Fabian socialism from Communism, observing of the speed of political reform that "the inevitability of gradualness cannot fail to be appreciated" (reported in the *Times*, 27 Jun 1923, 17).

On 3 Feb 1932, TSE wrote to Stephen Spender that he had read Murry's recent articles in the *Adelphi* with interest: "I quite agree that his criticism of Russian Communism is a brilliant summary. I wish that I was sure that his alternative [English Communism] was equally clear." On 1 Apr, TSE thanked Murry for an inscribed copy of *The Necessity of Communism* (1932): "I was able to read it at once and did in fact mention it in my last talk. You will understand that in a series of talks which have to be so elementary in character and hortatory in tone it was impossible to do more." In an anonymous review, Geoffrey West summarized Murry's message in this book: "Communism is today the one living religion – Marx is the prophet – it should be the immediate task of all men of good will to make his teachings effective in the social and economic sphere" (*TLS*, 7 Apr 1932, 240).

12. The book of Exodus in the Old Testament tells how Moses led the Israelites out of Egypt from where they spent forty years in the desert, before reaching sight of the Promised Land.

13. In 1931, TSE told E. W. F. Tomlin that he no longer intended to write the book on political philosophy "The Outline of Royalism" advertised in his 1928 preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (3.513). On 8 Jun 1932, TSE wrote to Charles Smyth that his theory of royalism "has always been unformulated in my own mind."

14. TSE discussed Thomist philosophy with Jacques Maritain on his visits to Paris, describing Maritain in "Three Reformers" (1928) as "the most popular and influential exponent of neo-Thomism" (3.504).

15. TSE touches on most of these contemporary political issues in his recent *Criterion* editorials; bi-metallism (OED): "the system of allowing the unrestricted currency of two metals (e.g. gold and silver) at a fixed ratio to each other, as coined money."

16. 2 Kings 5:12. The leper Naaman, seeking a cure from the prophet Elisha, was angered to be told that he could be cured simply by dipping seven times in the river Jordan. Preparing to leave, he was persuaded by his servant to try the cure and was healed.

17. Pascal: "Jésus sera en agonie jusqu'à la fin du monde." *Pensées*, ed. Léon Brunschvicg (Paris: Hachette, 1909), 575, n.552. In the translation of *Pascal's Pensées* by W. F. Trotter, which TSE introduced (4.338), the passage reads: "Jesus will be in agony even to the end of the world" (148).

John Ford[1]

Among other possible classifications, we might divide the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists into those who would have been great even had Shakespeare never lived, those who are positive enough to have brought some positive contribution after Shakespeare, and those whose merit consists merely in having exploited successfully a few Shakespearian devices or echoed here and there the Shakespearian verse. In the first class would fall Marlowe, Jonson and Chapman; in the second, Middleton, Webster and Tourneur; in the third, Beaumont and Fletcher and Shirley as tragedian. This kind of division could not support very close question, especially in its distinction between the second and the third class, but it is of some use at the beginning, in helping us to assign a provisional place to John Ford.[2]

The standard set by Shakespeare is that of a continuous development from first to last: a development in which the choice both of theme and of dramatic and verse technique in each play seems to be determined increasingly by Shakespeare's state of feeling, by the particular stage of his emotional maturity at the time. What is "the whole man" is not simply his greatest or maturest achievement, but the whole pattern formed by the sequence of plays; so that we may say confidently that the full meaning of any one of his plays is not in itself alone, but in that play in the order in which it was written, in its relation to all of Shakespeare's other plays, earlier and later: we must know all of Shakespeare's work in order to know any of it. No other dramatist of the time approaches anywhere near to this perfection of pattern, of pattern superficial and profound; but the measure in which dramatists and poets approximate to this unity in a lifetime's work, is one of the measures of major poetry and drama.[3] We feel a similar interest, in less degree, in the work of Jonson and Chapman, and certainly in the unfinished work of Marlowe; in less degree still, the interest is in the work of Webster, baffling as the chronological order of Webster's plays makes it.[4] Even without an *œuvre*, some dramatists can effect a satisfying unity and significance of pattern in single plays, a unity springing from the depth and coherence of a number of emotions and feelings, and not only from dramatic and poetic skill. The *Maid's Tragedy*, or *A King and No King*, is better constructed, and has as many poetic lines, as *The Changeling*, but is far inferior in the degree of inner necessity in the feeling: something more profound and more complex than what is ordinarily called "sincerity."[5†]

It is significant that the first of Ford's important plays to be performed, so far as we have knowledge, is one which depends very patently upon some of the devices, and still more upon the feeling tone, of Shakespeare's last period. *The Lover's Melancholy* was licensed for the stage in 1628;[6] it could hardly have been written but for *Cymbeline*, *The Winter's Tale*, *Pericles* and *The Tempest*. Except for the comic passages, which are, as in all of Ford's plays, quite atrocious, it is a pleasant, dreamlike play without violence or exaggeration. As in other of his plays, there are verbal echoes of Shakespeare numerous enough; but what is more interesting is the use of the Recognition Scene, so important in Shakespeare's later plays, to the significance of which as a Shakespeare symbol Mr. Wilson Knight has drawn attention.[7] In Shakespeare's plays this is primarily the recognition of a long-lost daughter, secondarily of a wife; and we can hardly read the later plays attentively without admitting that the father-and-daughter theme was one of very deep symbolic value to him in his last productive years: Perdita, Marina and Miranda share some beauty of which his earlier heroines do not possess the secret. Now Ford is struck by the dramatic and poetic effectiveness of the situation, and uses it on a level hardly higher than that of the device of twins in comedy; so in *The Lover's Melancholy* he introduces two such scenes, one the recognition of Eroclea in the guise of Parthenophil by her lover Palador, the second her recognition (accompanied, as in *Pericles*, by soft music) by her aged father Meleander.[8] Both of these scenes are very well carried out, and in the first we have a passage in that slow solemn rhythm which is Ford's distinct contribution to the blank verse of the period.

> Minutes are numbered by the fall of sands,
> As by an hourglass; the span of time
> Doth waste us to our graves, and we look on it:
> An age of pleasure, revelled out, comes home
> At last, and ends in sorrow; but the life,
> Weary of riot, numbers every sand,
> Wailing in sighs, until the last drop down;
> So to conclude calamity in rest.[9]

The tone and movement are so positive that when in a dull masque by Ford and Dekker, called *The Sun's Darling*, we come across such a passage as

Winter at last draws on the Night of Age;
Yet, still a humour of some novel fancy
Untasted or untried, puts off the minute
Of resolution, which should bid farewell
To a vain world of weariness and sorrows. . . .[10]

we can hardly doubt the identity of the author. The scenes, as said above, are well planned and well written, and are even moving; but it is in such scenes as these that we are convinced of the incommensurability of writers like Ford (and Beaumont and Fletcher) with Shakespeare. It is not merely that they fail where he succeeds; it is that they had no conception of what he was trying to do; they speak another and cruder language. In their poetry there is no symbolic value; theirs is good poetry and good drama, but it is poetry and drama of the surface. And in a play like *The Revenger's Tragedy*, or *Women Beware Women*, or *The White Devil*, there is some of that inner significance which becomes the stronger and stronger undertone of Shakespeare's plays to the end. You do not find that in Ford.

It is suggested, then, that a dramatic poet cannot create characters of the greatest intensity of life unless his personages, in their reciprocal actions and behaviour in their story, are somehow dramatizing, but in no obvious form, an action or struggle for harmony in the soul of the poet. In this sense Ford's most famous, though not necessarily best play may be called "meaningless," and, in so far as we may be justified in disliking its horrors, we are justified by its lack of meaning. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* is surely one of the most read of minor Jacobean plays, and the only one of Ford's which has been lately revived upon the stage.[11] It is the best constructed, with the exception of *Perkin Warbeck*, and the latter play is somewhat lacking in action. To the use of incest between brother and sister for a tragic plot there should be no objection of principle: the test is, however, whether the dramatic poet is able to give universal significance to a perversion of nature which, unlike some other aberrations, is defended by no one. The fact that it is defended by no one might, indeed, lend some colour of inoffensiveness to its dramatic use. Certainly, it is to Ford's credit that, having chosen this subject – which was suggested by an Italian tale – he went in for it thoroughly.[12] There is none of the prurient flirting with impropriety which makes Beaumont and Fletcher's *King and No King* meretricious, and which is most evident and nauseous in the worst play which Ford himself ever wrote, *The Fancies Chaste and Noble*; a kind of prurience from which the comedy of Wycherley is entirely free.[13] Furthermore, Ford handles the theme with all the seriousness of which he is capable, and he can hardly be accused here of wanton sensationalism. It is not the sort of play which an age wholly corrupt would produce; and the signs of decay in Ford's age are more clearly visible in the plays of Beaumont and Fletcher than in his own.[14] Ford does not make the unpleasant appear pleasant; and when, at the moment of avowed love, he makes Annabella say

> Brother, even by our mother's dust, I charge you,
> Do not betray me to your mirth or hate. . .[15]

he is certainly double-stressing the horror, which from that moment he will never allow you to forget; but if he did not stress the horror he would be the more culpable. There is nothing in the play to which could be applied the term appropriately used in the advertisements of some films: the "peppy situation."[16]

We must, admit, too, that the versification and poetry, for example the fine speech of Annabella in Act V, Sc. v., are of a very high order:

> Brother, dear brother, know what I have been,
> And know that now there's but a dining-time
> 'Twixt us and our confusion. . .
> Be not deceived, my brother;
> This banquet is an harbinger of death
> To you and me; resolve yourself it is,
> And be prepared to welcome it.[17]

Finally, the low comedy, bad as it is, is more restrained in space, and more relevant to the plot, than is usual with Ford; and the death of Bergetto ("is all this mine own blood?") is almost pathetic.[18] When all is said, however, there are serious shortcomings to render account of. The sub-plot of Hippolita is tedious, and her death superfluous.[19] More important, the passion of Giovanni and Annabella is not shown as an affinity of temperament due to identity of blood; it hardly rises above the purely carnal infatuation. In *Antony and Cleopatra* (which is no more an apology for adultery than *'Tis Pity* is an apology for incest) we are made to feel convinced of an overpowering attraction towards each other of two persons, not only in defiance of conventional morality and against self-interest: an attraction as fatal as that indicated by the love-potion motif in *Tristan und Isolde*. We see clearly why Antony and Cleopatra find each other congenial; and we see their relation, during the course of the play, become increasingly serious. But Giovanni is merely selfish and self-willed, of a temperament to want a thing the more because it is forbidden; Annabella is pliant, vacillating and negative: the one almost a monster of egotism, the other virtually a moral defective. Her rebellious taunting of her violent husband has an effect of naturalness and arouses some sympathy; but the fact that Soranzo is himself a bad lot does not extenuate her willingness to ruin him. In short, the play has not the general significance and emotional depth (for the two go together) without which no such action can be justified; and this defect separates it completely from the best plays of Webster, Middleton and Tourneur.

There are two other plays, however, which are superior to *'Tis Pity She's a Whore*. The first is *The Broken Heart*, in which, with *'Tis Pity* and *The Lover's Melancholy*, we find some of the best "poetical" passages. Some of the best lines in *The Broken Heart* are given to the distraught Penthea; and, being reminded of another fine passage given to a crazed woman in *Venice Preserved*, we might be tempted to generalize, and suggest that it is easier for an inferior dramatic poet to write poetry when he has a lunatic character to speak it, because in such passages he is less tied down to relevance and ordinary sense.[20] The quite irrelevant and apparently meaningless lines

Remember,
When we last gathered roses in the garden,
I found my wits; but truly you lost yours.[21]

are perhaps the purest poetry to be found in the whole of Ford's writings; but the longer and better known passage preceding them is also on a very high level:

Sure, if we were all Sirens, we should sing pitifully,
And 'twere a comely music, when in parts
One sung another's knell: the turtle sighs
When he hath lost his mate; and yet some say
He must be dead first: 'tis a fine deceit
To pass away in a dream; indeed, I've slept
With mine eyes open a great while. No falsehood
Equals a broken faith; there's not a hair
Sticks on my head but, like a leaden plummet,
It sinks me to the grave: I must creep thither;
The journey is not long.[22]

Between the first and the second of these passages there is, however, a difference of kind rather than degree: the first is real poetry, the second is the echo of a mood which other dramatic poets had caught and realized with greater mastery. Yet it exhibits that which gives Ford his most certain claim to perpetuity: his distinct personal rhythm in blank verse which could be no one's but his alone.

As for the play itself, the plot is somewhat overloaded and distracted by the affairs of unfortunate personages, all of whom have an equal claim on our attention; Ford overstrains our pity and terror by calling upon us to sympathize now with Penthea, now with Calantha, now with Orgilus, now with Ithocles; and the recipe by which good and evil are mixed in the characters of Orgilus and Ithocles is one which renders them less sympathetic, rather than more human. The scene in which Calantha, during the revels, is told successively the news of the death of her father, of Penthea and of her betrothed, and the scene in the temple which follows, must have been very effective on the stage; and the style is elevated and well sustained. The end of the play almost deserves the extravagant commendation of Charles Lamb;[23] but to a later critic it appears rather as a recrudescence of the Senecan mood:

> They are the silent griefs which cut the heart-strings,
> Let me die smiling.[24]

than as a profound searching of the human heart. The best of the play, and it is Ford at his best, is the character and the action of Penthea, the lady who, after having been betrothed to the man she loves, is taken from him and given to a rival to gratify the ambitions of her brother. Even here, Ford misses an opportunity, and lapses in taste, by making the unloved husband Bassanes, the vulgar jealous elderly husband of comedy: Penthea is a character which deserved, and indeed required, a more dignified and interesting foil.[25] We are also diverted from her woes by the selfish revengefulness of her lost lover, who, having been robbed of happiness himself, is determined to contrive that no one else shall be happy.[26] Penthea, on the other hand, commands all our sympathy when she pleads the cause of her brother Ithocles, the brother who has ruined her life, with the Princess Calantha, whom he loves. She is throughout a dignified, consistent and admirable figure; Penthea, and the Lady Katherine Gordon in *Perkin Warbeck*, are the most memorable of all Ford's characters.

Perkin Warbeck is little read, and does not contain any lines and passages such as those which remain in the memory after reading the other plays;

but it is unquestionably Ford's highest achievement, and is one of the very best historical plays outside of the works of Shakespeare in the whole of Elizabethan and Jacobean drama.[27] To make this base-born pretender to the throne of England into a dignified and heroic figure was no light task, and is not one which we should, after reading the other plays, have thought Ford competent to perform; but here for once there is no lapse of taste or judgment. Warbeck is made to appear as quite convinced that he is the lawful heir to the throne of England. We ourselves are left almost believing that he was; in the right state of uncertainty, wondering whether his kingly end steadfast behaviour is due to his Royal blood, or merely due to his passionate conviction that he is of royal blood. What is more remarkable still, is that Ford has succeeded, not merely, as with Penthea, in creating one real person among shadows, but in fixing the right fitness and the right contrast between characters. Even at the end, when the earlier pretender, Lambert Simnel, who contentedly serves the King (Henry VII) in the humble captivity of falconer, is brought forward to plead with Perkin to accept a similar destiny, the scene is not degrading, but simply serves to emphasize the nobility and constancy of the hero. But to make a man, who went down to history as an impostor, into a heroic figure, was not Ford's only difficulty and success.[28] The King of Scotland, in order to demonstrate his faith, and emphasize his support of Perkin Warbeck's claim to the English throne, gives him to wife his own niece, the Lady Katherine Gordon, very much against her father's wishes. To make a lady, so abruptly given away to a stranger and dedicated to such very doubtful fortunes, into not only a loyal but a devoted wife, is not easy; but Ford succeeds. The introduction of her admirer, her countryman Lord Dalyell, does not disturb the effect, for Katherine is not shown as having already reciprocated his affection. Dalyell is merely present as a reminder of the kind of happy and suitable marriage which Katherine would have made in her own country, but for the appearance of Warbeck and the caprice of the King; and his touching devotion to her cause throughout the action only exhibits more beautifully her own devotion to her husband. Ford for once succeeded in a most difficult attempt; and the play of *Perkin Warbeck* is almost flawless.

Of Ford's other plays, *Love's Sacrifice* is reprinted in the "Mermaid" selection.[29] It has a few fine scenes, but is disfigured by all the faults of which Ford was capable. In the complete editions – the Moxon edition with introduction (to Ford and Massinger) by Hartley Coleridge is obtainable, and there is also the edition of the Quarto texts published at the University of Louvain, the first volume edited by the late Professor Bang, and the second (1927) by Professor De Vocht – there are no other plays by Ford which retain any interest. It is difficult now to assent to Lamb's words, "Ford was of the first order of poets," or to Mr. Havelock Ellis's attempt (in his excellent introduction to the 'Mermaid' volume) to present Ford as a modern man and a psychologist.[30] Mr. Ellis makes the assertion that Ford is nearer to Stendhal and Flaubert than he is to Shakespeare.[31] Ford, nevertheless, depended upon Shakespeare; but it would be truer to say that Shakespeare is nearer to Stendhal and Flaubert than he is to Ford.[32] There is a very important distinction to be drawn at this point. Stendhal and Flaubert, and to them might be added Balzac, are analysts of the individual soul as it is found in a particular phase of society; and in their work is found as much sociology as individual psychology. Indeed, the two are aspects of one thing; and the greater French novelists, from Stendhal to Proust, chronicle the rise, the regime, and the decay of the upper bourgeoisie in France. In Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, and even in the comedy of Congreve and Wycherley, there is almost no analysis of the particular society of the times, except in so far as it records the rise of the City families, and their ambition to ally themselves with needy peerages and to acquire country estates. Even that rise of the City, in *Eastward Hoe* and *Michaelmas Term*, is treated lightly as a foible of the age, and not as a symptom of social decay and change.[33] It is indeed in the lack of this sense of a "changing world," of corruptions and abuses peculiar to their own time, that the Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists are blessed. We feel that they believed in their own age, in a way in which no nineteenth- or twentieth-century writer of the greatest seriousness has been able to believe in his age. And accepting their age, they were in a position to concentrate their attention, to their respective abilities, upon the common characteristics of humanity in all ages, rather than upon the differences. We can partly criticize their age through our study of them, but they did not so criticize it themselves. In the work of Shakespeare as a whole, there is to be read the profoundest, and indeed one of the most sombre studies of humanity that has ever been made in poetry; though it is in fact so comprehensive that we cannot qualify it as a whole as either glad or sorry. We recognize the same assumption of permanence in his minor fellows. Dante held it also, and the great Greek dramatists. In periods of unsettlement and change we do not observe this: it was a changing world which met the eyes of Lucian or of Petronius. But in the kind of analysis in which Shakespeare was supreme the other Elizabethan and Jacobean dramatists differed only in degree and in comprehensiveness.

Such observations are not made in order to cast doubt upon the ultimate value or the permanence of the greatest nineteenth-century fiction. But for the age in which Shakespeare lived and the age into which his influence extended after his death, it must be his work, and his work as a whole, that is our criterion. The whole of Shakespeare's work is *one* poem; and it is the poetry of it in this sense, not the poetry of isolated lines and passages or the poetry of the single figures which he created, that matters most. A man might, hypothetically, compose any number of fine passages or even of whole poems which would each give satisfaction, and yet not be a great poet, unless we felt them to be united by one significant, consistent, and developing personality. Shakespeare is the one, among all his contemporaries, who fulfils these conditions; and the nearest to him is Marlowe. Jonson and Chapman have the consistency, but a far lower degree of significant development; Middleton and Webster take a lower place than these; the author of *The Revenger's Tragedy*, whether we call him Tourneur or Middleton or another, accomplishes all that can be accomplished within the limits of a single play.[34] But in all these dramatists there is the essential, as well as the superficies, of poetry; they give the pattern, or we may say the undertone, of the personal emotion, the personal drama and struggle, which no biography, however full and intimate, could give us; which nothing can give us but our experience of the plays themselves. Ford, as well as Fletcher, wrote enough plays for us to see the absence of essential poetry. Ford's poetry, as well as Beaumont and Fletcher's, is of the surface: that is to say, it is the result of the stock of expressions of feeling accumulated by the greater men. It is the absence of purpose – if we may use the word "purpose" for something more profound than any formulable purpose can be – in such dramatists as Ford, Beaumont, Fletcher, Shirley and, later Otway, and still later Shelley, which makes their drama tend towards mere sensationalism.[35] Many reasons might be found, according to the particular historical aspect from which we consider the problem. But Ford, as dramatic poet, as writer of dramatic blank verse, has one quality which assures him of a higher place than even Beaumont and Fletcher; and that is a quality which any poet may envy him. The varieties of cadence and tone in blank verse are none too many, in the history of English verse; and Ford, though intermittently, was able to manipulate sequences of words in blank verse in a manner which is quite his own.

NOTES

1. As printed in *SE*; originally "John Ford," *TLS*, 1579 (5 May 1932), 317-18, an anonymous review of *Materials for the Study of the Old English Drama, New Series, First Volume: John Ford's Dramatic Works*, vol 2, ed. H. de Vocht (Louvain: Librairie universitaire, 1927). Pp. 408. The volume contains the following plays: *The Broken Heart* (1633); *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* (1633), *The Chronicle of Perkin Warbeck* (1634), *The Fancies Chaste and Noble* (1638) and *The Ladies Trial* (1639). Henry de Vocht (1878-1962) was Professor of English Philology at the University of Louvain.

On 5 July 1928, TSE acknowledged receipt of his *TLS* review copy to Bruce Richmond. However, on 13 Mar 1929, he told Richmond: "I had thought that you were not really very keen on the Ford, and so had dropped it" (*L5* 465). When Richmond inquired again about the article on 30 Nov, TSE replied that he could "only apologise" (*L4* 689); by 18 Mar 1930, he was prepared to resign the commission in order to focus on a review examining Tourneur. Finally promising to "get to work on Ford" on 4 May 1931 (*L5* 559), he had to report that the essay had still not been started on 26 Nov (*L5* 758). It was drafted in the first two weeks of Apr 1932, in time for inclusion in both the London and New York editions of *SE* (published simultaneously on 15 Sept 1932).

2. TSE refers to George Saintsbury's claim in his *History of Elizabethan Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1887) that Ford's genius "was of the second order, not the first" (402).

3. For TSE's earlier comments on the unity and pattern of Shakespearean drama, see his introduction to *The Wheel of Fire* (1930) (4.415).

4. TSE had encountered the difficulties of dating Webster's plays when he reviewed F. L. Lucas's four-volume edition of *The Complete Works* (1927) in the *Criterion* for June 1928 (3.425).

5†. In *TLS*: paragraph omitted from *SE*: "There are two accessible complete editions of Ford. There is the Moxon edition of Massinger and Ford together, with an Introduction by Hartley Coleridge (1840). And we have now the second volume (1927) of the edition begun by Bang in his *Materialien zur Kunde des Aelteren Englishen Dramas*, completed by Professor de Vocht. The latter is an edition primarily for scholars and is a reproduction of the Quarto texts: we are promised a third volume, with variants and textual notes, and an essay by Mr. Bertram Lloyd, who is preparing a critical edition of Ford's works."

6. *The Lover's Melancholy* was performed at Blackfriars and at the Globe in Nov 1628 and published in 1629.

7. Knight examined the symbolism of the Recognition Scenes in Shakespeare's late plays in *Myth and Miracle* (1929), which TSE read in manuscript.

8. The love entanglement arising from Eroclea's male disguise (as Parthenophil) follows the convention of cross-dressing in *As You Like It* and *Twelfth Night* rather than Shakespeare's late plays.

9. *The Lover's Melancholy* IV.iii.66-73; TSE quotes from his Mermaid Series edition of *John Ford*, ed. Havelock Ellis (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1903).

10. *The Sun's Darling* (1656), subtitled "A Moral Masque," was written by Ford and Thomas Dekker.

11. *'Tis Pity She's a Whore* was performed at the Shaftesbury Theatre in London by the Phoenix Society on 28-29 Jan 1923. In "Dramatis Personae" (1923), TSE described it as an "excellent production" (2:434).

12. Gifford and Dyce's edition of *The Works of John Ford* (London: James Toovey, 1869) suggests that the "groundwork of this dreadful plot is loosely noticed by Bandello" (xxx), although the incest plot is more commonly linked to a contemporary French tale in François de Rosset's *Les Histoires tragiques de nostre temps* (1615).

13. In Beaumont and Fletcher's tragicomedy *A King and No King*, King Arbaces falls in love with his sister Panthea. In the last act it is revealed Arbaces is not the true king, Panthea is the queen in her own right, and that since they are not, after all, brother and sister they are free to marry.

14. On Ford's "decadence," see Stuart P. Sherman, "Forde's Contribution to the Decadence of the Drama" in *Materialien zur Kunde des älteren englischen Dramas*, vol 23, ed. Willy Bang (Louvain: Librairie universitaire, 1908, vii-xix), the first volume of this edition of Ford's works in this series, mentioned by TSE in the deleted *TLS* paragraph (n. 5 above) of this article.

15. I.iii.127-28.

16. "peppy": energetic or vigorous.

17. V.v.18-20, 28-31.

18. III.vii.33. Arabella's dull-witted suitor Bergetto is mistakenly murdered by Grimaldi.

19. Hippolita attempts to murder Soranzo in revenge for his seduction of her but is poisoned by a trick.

20. *Venice Preserved; or, A Plot Discovered* (1682), a tragedy by Thomas Otway.

21. IV.ii.137-39. These lines relate to the earlier scene in the garden between Penthea and Orgilus where she seeks to justify her rejection of him.

22. IV. ii.178-88.

23. Charles Lamb commented: "the expression of this transcendent scene almost bears me in imagination to Calvary and the Cross." *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets* (London: Longman, 1808), 264.

24. V.iii.85-86.

25. The madly jealous husband Bassanes is modeled on Corvino in Ben Jonson's *Volpone*.

26. Broken-hearted Orgilus was betrothed to Penthea before her enforced marriage.

27. TSE echoes Hartley Coleridge's introduction to *The Dramatic Works of Massinger and Ford* (London: Moxon, 1840), who said of *Perkin Warbeck*: "It is indeed the best specimen of the historic drama to be found outside Shakespeare" (xlviii). Responding to TSE's claim in a letter to the *TLS* (12 May 1932), Clifford Bax contended: "To set *Perkin Warbeck* at the top of Ford's work is truly astonishing" (351).

28. Ford departs from his chronicle sources by making Warbeck refuse to admit he is an impostor.

29. *Love's Sacrifice* (1633) does not appear in de Vocht's edition under review. The play revolves around the story of Bianca, Duchess of Pavia, who is in love with the elderly Duke's young friend, Fernando.

30. Lamb, *Specimens of English Dramatic Poets*, 264-65.

31. In the introduction to the Mermaid edition, Havelock Ellis asserted, "Ford is the most modern of the tribe to whom he belonged," adding, "He was an analyst" less closely related to his contemporaries than to "the writer of *Le Rouge et le Noir* and the yet greater writer of *Madame Bovary*" (xvi-xvii).

32. TSE follows John Buchan, who remarked that as "an exponent of the naked human soul" Ford "is akin in his subtle analysis to Stendhal, Flaubert and the Goncourts." *A History of English Literature* (London: Nelson, 1923), 183.

33. *Eastward Hoe* (1605) is a satire and city comedy by George Chapman, Ben Jonson, and John Marston. *Michaelmas Term* (1607) is a comedy by Thomas Middleton.

34. TSE discusses the authorship of *The Revenger's Tragedy* in "Cyril Tourneur" (1930) (4.197) and in "Tourneur and 'The Revenger's Tragedy'" (1931) (4.221).

35. In his introduction to the Mermaid edition, Havelock Ellis pointed out the likeness of the poetic style of Shelley's fragmentary play *Charles the First* (first published in part posthumously in 1824; a facsimile of the original draft notebook was published in 1991) to Ford's dramatic verse (xvi). Shelley refers to Ford in the Preface to *The Revolt of Islam* (1817).

What Is Modern Psychology?

Letter to the Editor of *The Listener*

The Listener, 7 (11 May 1932) 698

I think that Professor Pear has missed the point of my brief remarks about modern psychology; but that, I perceive, is chiefly my own fault. The phrase which I used, "modern psychology or psycho-analysis," was a deplorable ellipsis.[1] Although it is twenty years since I studied psychology seriously, I was quite aware that psycho-analysis is only one department, or perhaps one type, of psychological study.[2] I should have said: "modern psychology, which for the purposes of this talk is represented by psycho-analysis." I was, as the context ought to have made clear, concerned only with psychology in so far as it infringes upon the domain of theology; and that psychologists do so infringe, Freud's *Future of an Illusion* and some of the popular works of Adler make abundantly evident.[3]

I ought also to explain to Professor Pear the point of my joke about "sublimation." The joke is, of course, that, as he says, sublimation was invented "in relation to the sexual instincts."[4] Professor Pear has not controverted my point that "sublimation" means practically "substitution"; or alternatively, my contention, that the theory of sublimation infringes upon the territory of *Werttheorie*.[5] The *higher* values (not merely alternative values) but exist (or if you prefer, subsist) already; and what we want is the science which tells us about them; and that science turns out to be theology.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

[1] On 4 May, the *Listener* published a letter by Tom Hatherley Pear (1886-1972), since 1919 Professor of Psychology at the University of Manchester, responding to TSE's broadcast talk "The Search for Moral Sanction" (4.446). Professor Pear objected to TSE's apparent conflation of modern psychology with psychoanalysis: "I think, if Mr. Eliot will read a recent *resumé* of psychology, for the general public, Dr. C. S. Myers' presidential address to the Psychology section of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (London meeting, 1931) he will not identify modern psychology with one of its branches, important as that branch is" (651).

[2] TSE studied the theories of the French psychologist Pierre Janet during his year in Paris 1910-11.

3. In Dec 1928, in a *Criterion* book review of the Hogarth Press edition of Freud's *The Future of an Illusion*, TSE characterized "Dr. Freud's brief summary of his views on the future of Religion" as "shrewd and yet stupid" (3.551). The most recent popular work by Adler was *What Life Should Mean to You* (1932). Collections of Adler's writings had been edited by TSE's acquaintances at the "Chandos Group," Philip Mairet and Alan Porter.

4. TSE's broadcast talk drew a humorous analogy to illustrate Freud's concept of sublimation: "Suppose that my trouble is diagnosed as a suppressed craving for caviare; Well, that's something, to know what the cause of the trouble is. But I have not the money to buy enough caviare to satisfy the craving. I can, however, cultivate a taste for playing the flute or cross-country running. But in my own experience I have never been able to deal with any of my low appetites or vulgar tastes in this way. I have perceived their transience, their unsatisfactoriness, and the horror of satiety which is far beyond the famine of deprivation; but I have never known a desire to be expelled by anything but another desire" (4.449).

Professor Pear responded: "I re-read Mr. Eliot's view of 'sublimation' with care, for it is humiliating to overlook a joke. But, reflecting that jokes are uncommon at 5.30 on Sundays, I take him seriously. The concept of sublimation was originally formed not to explain anyone's taste for caviar, but in relation to the sexual instincts. Why draw caviar across the trail? It is just as effective, and more patriotic in 1932, to employ the customary red herring" (651).

5. *Werttheorie*: theory of value. TSE was presumably familiar with the *System der Werttheorie* (1897) of Austrian psychologist Christian von Ehrenfels, whom he mentions among theorists of value in "New Philosophers" (1:730).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 11 (July 1932) 676-83

In *Fiction and the Reading Public*[1]* Mrs. Q. D. Leavis has written a useful book: that is, a book which provides information so presented as to allow us to make our own generalizations. Those who read the book intelligently will be likely to engage in speculations further than those of the author. Mrs. Leavis has attempted, not a history of the novel, but a history of the best-seller; a history, therefore, of the changes, and (as one would expect) the decline of taste in the last three hundred years. Her text may be taken as the two passages from Mr. Richards's *Principles of Literary Criticism*, which she quotes:

> there is some evidence, uncertain and slight no doubt, that such things as "best-sellers" (compare *Tarzan* with *She*), magazine verses, mantelpiece pottery, Academy pictures, Music Hall songs, County Council buildings, War Memorials . . . are decreasing in merit.
>
> Best-sellers in all the arts, exemplifying as they do the most general levels of attitude development, are worthy of very close study. No theory of criticism is satisfactory which is not able to explain their wide appeal and to give clear reasons why those who disdain them are not necessarily snobs.[2]

She describes her method as "anthropological" [xv]; and if she means by this term, as I suppose she does, that not only individual and social psychology, but also economics and sociology, are no longer to be ignored by literary criticism, then I am wholly in agreement. The book will no doubt be soon superseded, and we should hope that it will, whether by its author or by someone else; for, as the first of its kind, its business is to stimulate more comprehensive investigation than this book can pretend to make. Her information about what is published, what is sold, and how it is sold, may not be very surprising to those who have been connected with publishing houses, with periodicals, with certain branches of education, and with criticism and reviewing of books; but to them the documentation should be useful, and to them and to the larger less-informed literate public, it should give much matter for meditation.

As for Mrs. Leavis's conclusions, I can agree up to a certain point. I fear that to many cultivated readers she may give merely the impression that the development of modern society has inevitably brought about a deterioration of literary values, and that this is all there is to it; that in consequence, the only possible behaviour for those few who really appreciate art is a kind of monastic tenacity to values which the world has repudiated. I am not acquainted with the situation in British Honduras (see page 272);[3] I cannot but feel that Mrs. Leavis's "armed and conscious minority" determined to "preserve" [270] what can be preserved gives the effect of a gallant but hopeless rearguard action. I should be doing Mrs. Leavis an injustice in suggesting that she is defending, or supposing that what she defends is a "lost cause." I have myself no great taste for lost causes. I mean that if I believe in a cause I find it impossible to believe that the cause is lost. If it really appears to me to be lost, then I must stop and examine, whether I have really cared purely for its essence, or whether I have attached myself as much to an impermanent form.[4]

It may be said, of course, that the prevalence of bad taste, the pernicious habit of novel-reading, and the vast success of the fourth-rate in our time are matters of no importance so long as a small public survives to appreciate the best. We may say that it was only to be expected that when the whole public had been taught to read, it would choose to read very poor stuff; that the taste of the mob can never be much elevated, because of its invincible mental laziness; and that the Athenian crowd would never have applauded Aristophanes if it had experienced the pleasures of Mr. Noel Coward and the cinema. But there is a great deal more to it than this. An *élite* which is only recognized by itself is in a bad way. And, as Mrs. Leavis shows by some of her quotations from popular novels and from letters written to her by popular novelists, our *élite*, such as it is, is hardly respected by the second- and third-rate writers: its rôle is to be sneered at and sometimes to be pilfered from. One of the most interesting phenomena to which she calls attention is the increasing stratification of literature into classes, each of which prefers to ignore the others.[5] Thus the labour of the few at the top, their labour in developing human sensibility, their labour in inventing new forms of expression and new critical views of life and society, is largely in vain. A society which does not recognize the existence of art is barbaric. But a society which pretends that it recognizes art by tolerating the Royal Academy and patronizing such novelists as Mr. Thornton Wilder, Mr. Hemingway and Mr. Priestley (at best) is decidedly decadent.[6]

There is a modern theory of art, applied with especial pertinence to literary art, of which, no doubt a great deal will be heard. It is (to put it crudely) that art is entirely a form of social expression, that it is determined in its forms by social and economic conditions, that it is wholly relative to these conditions and has no meaning beyond them.[7]* I cannot, of course, hold this view myself: it seems to me that this would reduce all art, once the society which produced it had passed away, to mere archaeological remains or at best, object-lessons or obscure prophecies. And anyone who is committed to religious dogma must also be committed to a theory of art which insists upon the permanent as well as the changing, and which cares as much, let us say, about the resemblances between the draughtsmanship of Hokusai and Pollaiuolo as it does about the differences.[8] But the relation of the forms of art to the social background is a very important part of criticism which has not been adequately explored, and is a problem which becomes more acute in a society which is more dissatisfied with itself, more and more conscious of change and decay.

It is certainly not the artist's business to be wholly aware of the "elements" of permanent and transitory in his own work or deliberately to set out a composition of the permanently human with the local in time and place.[9] It is not even altogether the critic's business; for not the purest critical sensibility can isolate the permanent "beauty" of the work of art from its time and place. But upon everything but the best the social kind of literary criticism must fall mercilessly; the more degraded a society becomes, the more clearly it will expose itself in its reading-matter; and I am inclined to wonder whether to-day Britain and America have not fallen lower than any other Western countries. And the function of fiction such as that dealt with by Mrs. Leavis in her last chapter, "Living at the Novelist's Expense," is apparently to soothe the minds of people who are not even alive enough to have anything to dream about.[10] Just as we exclaim of the readers of the tabloid press: "these people ought to have something else to do!" so we recognize that the existence of the "novel-reader" indicates a bad organization of society. In a properly organized world the vast majority of novels such as are published to-day would not be published, because there would be no market; the people who read them would have something better to do than to read. And they would not be written, because their authors would have something better to do than to write. For the great majority of novels do only as the great majority of films: their purpose is to provide day-dreams. We know well enough what day-dreaming means, and what it can lead to, in individual psychology.[11] But it is now a disease of society.

It seems to me unlikely that any social changes, whether sudden or gradual, could lead to a state of things in which the major forms of literature could long be dispensed with.[12*] I conceive it possible that the secondary types of literature will alter a great deal; that some sorts of book produced today will no longer be required; and that some types of "men of letters" still extant will disappear. I cannot conceive of a future society in which Sir Edmund Gosse would be possible; and there will be many other popular entertainers for whom there will be no demand.[13] So far as literature is a trade, or even a career, it will be subject to as great changes as other trades and careers. The popular novels will very likely disappear, as both writers and readers find other occupations; and the finest living novelists are those whose work demands of the reader far more of an attention akin to *poetic* appreciation than any previous novelists have asked.[14*] But poetry, in one form or another, will always be wanted, and there will always be a few people who will feel compelled to write it; and the need for the theatre, in one form or another, will never, unless civilization not merely alters but disappears, be supplied by the cinema. The drama, perhaps, is one form which might gain new life in a new age, and at the same time provide a fresh, and much-needed, vehicle for poetry.[15*]

But although various kinds of social change might incinerate a vast quantity of rubbish, and clear fields for fresh planting, I cannot see any likelihood that either revolution or reform will, in itself, improve the quality of the produce. Just as no constitution of society can be devised in which the arts of the place-seeker will not in the end be more cultivated than those of the governor, in which the chief aim of the politician will not still be to gain power and to keep it; so also no social millennium can be conceived which will ensure the continued propagation of the highest forms of art. The simplest alternative would be the establishment of a static, uniform society in which mankind would be such that it would reject all genuine art as a superannuated superfluity. In arriving at this consummation, communism is liable to achieve what capitalism has begun.

Hitherto, periods of great art (and in that very restricted sense, great civilization) seem always to have arisen as the unintentional and unpredictable by-products of processes of social crystallization, in which some fortunate relation (not always, by any means, the same) appears between the individual and the community. To-day there is no community (for the

Russian and the Italian seem to me mechanical rather than spiritual communities) and therefore only imperfect individuals; it is when society is really united that eccentricity is possible.[16] Now, with the formation of a period of civilization "historical materialism" or "economic determinism" seems to me to have very little to do; not because it is determinism, but because it is *incomplete* determinism.[17*] Even Mr. Maurice Dobb (whose pamphlet, *On Marxism To-Day*,[18*] is the most lucid and persuasive brief account that I have read, and is calculated to dispel some errors) does not enlighten me. I can quite understand that during one brief period of time, the last two hundred years or so, conditions have been particularly favourable to prophecy. That is, life has become increasingly mechanized; and as men have been gradually discovering what they could do with the machine, it was not impossible for one man of genius to predict with accuracy some of the things that the machine was to do with men. Man thus learns to predict his own actions, by making himself into the likeness of those creations whose actions he has determined. Economic determinism, like any other kind of determinism within the scope of human mind, is possible, and has its legitimate application, only by a rigorous selection of elements within a restricted limit of time. And this selection is also a selection of values, and any narrow adherence to one set of values tends to be a menace. If your values are religious, then you may say that it is better that a million bodies should burn rather than one soul; if they are aesthetic, you may say that it is better that a million lives should be lost rather than one cathedral; if your values are humanitarian, that it is better that art and religion should perish rather than one man die of hunger.

It may be only my own prejudice which makes me believe that a communist régime might merely perfect the work of the capitalist régime in stamping out any vestiges of art, until finally mankind outgrew its primitive desire for that kind of enjoyment. But it is surely rational to maintain that we cannot expect any merely political or social change to raise the artistic sensibility of the public, to stimulate the flowering of artistic talent or to inaugurate a world of beauty. Things may well be much as before: "old consciences and new faces."[19] Fiction, not religion (according to Marx's silliest epigram), is the opium of the people to-day, and some other form of opium will be provided tomorrow, for some sort of opium they must have, until you can give them either religion, or to each man a job in which he can be passionately interested, or both.[20] For the present, no doubt commercial literature will continue to flourish and to pander, more and more severed from real literature. The latter will be produced by those who will not merely be content not to make a living by it, not merely content to have no career; but who will be resigned to a very small audience – for we all should like to think that our poetry might be read and declaimed in the public-house, the forecastle and the shipyard.[21] What is required for the production of great art seems to be any one of many possible situations in which the ingredients are liberty, individuality, and community.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "Chatto, 12s. 6d. net." Q. D. (Queenie Dorothy) Leavis (1906-81), literary scholar, a regular contributor to *Scrutiny*, co-edited by her husband, after its launch in May 1932.

2. *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1930), 36, 203. Richards supervised Leavis's doctoral research at Cambridge published, with small revisions, as *Fiction and the Reading Public*. Both Rider Haggard's *She* (1887) and Edgar Rice Burroughs's *Tarzan of the Apes* (1914) were popular adventure stories. Extracts from Burroughs's response to Q. D. Leavis's questionnaire were published in *Fiction and the Reading Public*. TSE observed in the *Christian News-Letter* for 8 July 1942: "Between the novels of such writers as Rider Haggard and Anthony Hope, and the popular fiction of the 1920's, a deterioration had already taken place" (4).

3. Leavis writes: "As a minor instance of what may be done by conscious resistance, the case of British Honduras comes to mind. Here, I am informed, we have a community which in deliberately setting out to resist American influence is actually preserving a traditional way of life" (271-72).

4. In "Francis Herbert Bradley" (1927), TSE argues: "If we take the widest and wisest view of a Cause, there is no such thing as a Lost Cause because there is no such thing as a Gained Cause. We fight for lost causes because we know that our defeat and dismay may be the preface to our successors' victory, though that victory itself will be temporary; we fight rather to keep something alive than in the expectation that anything will triumph" (3.308).

5. Leavis classifies this stratification of taste into a tripartite division: "It will be convenient to call these levels 'highbrow,' 'middlebrow' and 'lowbrow'" (20).

6. Thornton Wilder (1897-1975), American playwright and novelist, author of the Pulitzer Prize–winning novel *The Bridge of San Luis Rey* (1927). TSE met Wilder in 1933 during his lecture tour of the United States. J. B. Priestley (1894-1984), novelist, playwright, and broadcaster, author of *The Good Companions* (1929), which was awarded the James Tait Black Memorial Prize. On 6 Nov 1924, TSE told Richard Aldington in a letter that he had not seen Priestley's *Figures in Modern Literature* (1924) "because it seemed to be second rate from the notices I have read" (*L2* 530).

Hemingway's long-standing differences with TSE were made public in the *New Yorker* when it quoted his opinion that "the Eliot thing has been back and forth for a long time" (5 Nov 1932, 86-87). Although TSE admired Hemingway's prose, in a letter to the *Criterion* reviewer Orlo Williams of 2 Dec 1929, he commented: "Hemingway is at his best when he deals with barbarism in its proper place – i.e. Chicago gunmen at home etc. – but when he lets his barbarisms loose in Europe he ought to be arraigned for it. If they were pure barbarians I should not dislike them so much; but Hemingway seems to deny that human beings have any obligation to think, or to feel any but the most elementary emotions, or to express themselves in anything but stuttering repetitions of inanities" (*L4* 693).

In *Fiction and the Reading Public*, Wilder and Priestley are characterized as successful middlebrows and Hemingway as a popular novelist who also appeals to highbrows.

7*. TSE's note: "See some interesting articles on the Marxian theory of literature by Mr. Edmund Wilson in recent numbers of *The New Republic*; an essay by Prince D. S. Mirsky in *Exchanges* (Dec.): *Eliot et la fin de la poésie bourgeoise* (which considerably exceeds the importance of the nominal subject); and a brilliant essay on *Goethe* in a recent number of the *Times Literary Supplement*."

Edmund Wilson, "The Literary Class War: I," *New Republic*, 70 (4 May 1932), 319-23 defends Thornton Wilder from Communist critics; "The Literary Class War: II," *New Republic*, 70 (11 May 1932), 347-49, observes: 'the bourgeois critic . . . will approve a T. S. Eliot when he gropes for a faith and a system among the shadows of Anglo-Catholicism – even though they say they cannot agree with him." Edmund Wilson (1895-1972), American literary and social critic, author of *Axel's Castle* (1931) – which included a chapter on TSE – was at this time on the editorial board (with Max Eastman) of the *Modern Monthly*, which sought to promote dialogue between antagonistic left-wing intellectuals.

D. S. Mirsky, "Eliot et la fin de la poésie bourgeoise," *Échanges*, 5 (Dec 1931), 44-58, praises TSE: "Ce qui rend Eliot différent de tous ces poètes c'est qu'en lui une rare puissance poétique se trouve alliée à un thème d'une réelle importance sociale, au seul thème historiquement valable et sincère qui soit accessible à un poète bourgeois d'aujourd'hui" (48); (*trans*: What distinguishes Eliot from these poets is that in him an exceptional poetic power has allied itself to a truly important social theme, indeed, the only historically valid and sincere theme that remains for a bourgeois poet in our time). TSE was on friendly terms with Prince D. S. Mirsky (1890-1939), since 1921 lecturer in Russian at the School of Slavonic Studies, University of London. In 1931 Mirsky joined the Communist Party and in Sept 1932 he returned to Russia (where he later died in a Stalinist purge). On 22 Apr 1932, TSE wrote to Mirsky to solicit a contribution to the *Criterion* and to inform him that "I have just received a copy of the December number of *Échanges*. I had to write to you to tell you how good I think your article about my poetry is. I am hardly a judge of such articles, but to me at least this was about the most interesting thing that I have ever read, and short of being a Marxist myself I am very much in agreement with it. I wish that you might even do a book about contemporary English literature from your own point of view." Mirsky took TSE's advice in his scathing critique of *The Intelligentsia of Great Britain* (1935).

In "Under Which King, Bezonian?" *Scrutiny*, 1 (Dec 1932), 205-14. F. R. Leavis attacked Marxist literary criticism as represented by Edmund Wilson and D. S. Mirsky.

John Middleton Murry, "The Centenary of Goethe," *TLS*, 1573 (24 Mar 1932), 209-10. On 16 Mar 1932, TSE wrote to Spender: "I like Goethe's poetry too. I am bored by most of his prose that I have read, with the exception of one magnificent book. Do you know the invaluable *Conversations with Eckermann*? What I chiefly dislike about Goethe is the fact that he is having a centenary."

8. Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849), Japanese painter and printmaker, known in the West for a series of woodblock prints containing views of Mount Fuji. Antonio del Pollaiuolo (1429/1433-98), Florentine artist. TSE marked a reference to Pollaiuolo's painting of *The Martyrdom of Saint Sebastian* (ca. 1475) in the National Gallery in his Baedeker guide to London. In an unpublished address at a Royal Academy dinner in 1960 , TSE recalled: "I have no reputation whatever as an art critic, though I once, when young, wrote an essay on Pollaiuolo which earned the encomium of my teacher."

9. TSE discusses at length "the proper relation of the Eternal and the Transient" in his next *Criterion* "Commentary" for Oct 1932 (4.498).

10. Leavis writes: "Most bestsellers go on writing the same novel because it is the only one they can produce, and each variant of it is successively popular because the appeal of the commoner day-dreams is inexhaustible – they represent both for the author and reader a favourite form of self-indulgence" (237).

11. TSE refers to popular Freudian conceptions of daydreaming as a form of unconscious fantasy.

12*. TSE's note: "In his book, *The Literary Mind* (Scribner's), Mr. Max Eastman has some interesting remarks about the future of literature. He is relating it, however, to a future age which shall be generally 'scientific,' and is not concerned specifically with social changes. As the book will be reviewed later, I shall not comment further upon it."

Max Eastman (1883-1969), American poet and radical cultural critic, devotes the last part of *The Literary Mind: Its Place in an Age of Science* (1931) to the future of poetry, the novel and academic literary criticism. In a letter to I. A. Richards of 14 Jan 1932, TSE complains that Eastman "seems to condemn every living writer who has any connection with literature whatever," including Eliot (as critic and poet) and Richards. Richards strongly criticized Eastman's use of psychology in his *Criterion* review of *The Literary Mind* (Oct 1932), 150-55. Eastman defended himself in a robust letter published in the *Criterion*, 12 (Apr 1933), 488-91.

13. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1931, TSE remarks: "The place that Sir Edmund Gosse filled in the literary and social life of London is one that no one can ever fill again, because it is, so to speak, an office that has been abolished" (4.308).

14*. TSE's note: "I am not supposing a sudden mutation, though *Ulysses* is a landmark. The tendency was discernible in the work of novelists now dead. Henry James and Conrad display it here and there, and James's precursor, Hawthorne, may be mentioned." In "The Hawthorne Aspect" (1918), TSE examines in detail the sense in which Hawthorne was a precursor of Henry James (1:736).

15*. TSE's note: "The greatest deficiency in most of the contemporary verse which comes to my eye is the lack of any dramatic intent, which might help to correct its imperfectly conceived philosophies and its imperfectly objectified emotions."

16. In "Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse" (1929), TSE asks: "The interesting question to answer is whether Russia or Italy succeeds in concentrating all power into political hands, or whether they will merely evolve a *new* financial class" (3.662).

17*. TSE's note: "Incomplete, that is, with reference to such experiences as that of St. Peter when the cock crew. This kind of determinism is essential to Buddhism as well as to Christianity; but whether 'determinism' is the right word for it, I leave unsettled. See Jones's Karma, by May Sinclair, in *The Criterion* for October, 1923, p. 43."

TSE refers to a dialogue on the nature of karma: "'You say the will is free, Guru. How do you reconcile that with your theory of Karma? You can't escape your Karma.' 'You cannot escape it, Bikku,' said the Mahatma; 'but you made it for yourself in your last life and you were free to make it different.' . . . 'Still, it comes to this,' I said: 'if you could live your life again in the same circumstances, I take it you would do the same things. Nothing would be different. And you would not be free.' 'You would be free,' the Mahatma said, 'to do the same things.'" May Sinclair, "Jones's Karma," *Criterion*, 2 (Oct 1923), 43.

18*. TSE's note: "Hogarth Press. 1s. 6d. net." Maurice Dobb, *On Marxism To-day*, Day to Day Pamphlets, No. 10 (1932). Maurice Dobb (1900-76), Marxist economist, since 1924 lecturer at Cambridge University.

19. TSE alludes to John Dryden: "Blood and money will be lavished in all ages only for the preferment of new faces and old consciences." "Examen Poeticum" (1693), *Dryden's Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (London: Dent, 1912), 197.

20. Karl Marx: "Die Religion . . . ist das Opium des Volkes" [religion . . . is the opium of the people], *Introduction to "A Contribution to the Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right," Deutsch-Französische Jahrbücher* (Paris, 1844).

21. forecastle (OED): "In merchant vessels, the forward part of the vessel, under the deck, where the sailors live."

Preface to *Selected Essays*, by T. S. Eliot

London: Faber and Faber, 1932. Pp. 454; Preface, 7.[1]

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T.S.E.

London: April 1932.

NOTES

[1] Published on 15 Sept 1932, simultaneously with the American edition, to coincide with his arrival in America as the Charles Eliot Norton Professor at Harvard University for the 1932-33 academic year. The Preface is preceded by a separate dedication page [5]: "TO / HARRIET SHAW WEAVER / IN GRATITUDE, AND IN RECOGNITION / OF HER SERVICES / TO ENGLISH LETTERS"; statement on front cover of dust jacket, English edition: "This book contains the author's choice among all the prose he has written from the time he became assistant editor of *The Egoist*, in 1917, down to the present year." The table of contents for the volume is included in the illustrations, number 8.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 12 (Oct 1932) 73-79

It is greatly to the credit of the intellectuals of post-War Germany, living in a country which has been more politics-ridden than any other of Western Europe, and in an atmosphere which one might suppose most discouraging to dispassionate thought, that they have been able to produce so much that is first rate. It is a pity that work of this kind finds little appreciation in England; the spring comes slowly up our way, and modern Germany is only known by some of its novels and by a few books of topical interest. Writers of more permanent importance than Spengler are unknown.[1] Such names as those of Heidegger in philosophy and Heim in theology are known to only a handful; Friedrich Gundolf and Max Scheler are slightly known to some of our readers.[2] Ernst Robert Curtius is in a different category from any of these, and is already much more widely known, although we must admit that he is, like other important German writers, better known in Paris than in London. One justification for his being less known here – except to readers of *The Criterion* – is that he has occupied himself very largely for many years with the task of interpreting French civilization and French literature to Germany, as a number of books: his *Balzac*, his *Proust*, his *Französischer Geist im Neuen Europa*, and the book which has been recently (and not too well) translated under the title of *The Civilization of France* (Allen & Unwin: 12s. 6d. net) all attest.[3] But as one of those men such as Gide and Larbaud in France, Hofmannsthal in Austria and Ortega y Gasset in Spain, who have steadily laboured in the interest of the European spirit, his work deserves as much attention from us as from the French.[4]

His recent small book, *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* (Deutsche-Verlags-Anstalt, pp. 131) is perhaps not a book to be translated, inasmuch as it is a direct appeal to his German readers, but it is certainly a book to be read by everyone who can follow a simple and lucid German style, and who can also appreciate the problems of our time as being more serious than such as can be eased by national or imperial nostrums. It consists of five essays, of which the most valuable to foreigners are perhaps the last two, "Soziologie oder Revolution?" and "Humanismus als Initiative." The second of these is one of the best and most reasonable expositions of a "humanist" attitude that I have ever read.[5] But it was by a passage in the first that I was especially struck. Dr. Curtius is concerned with the views of a contemporary sociologist named Mannheim, of whose work I am ignorant, and who has hitherto been only a name to me.[6] "Indeed," says Curtius, "for many contemporary thinkers, Mannheim among them, there seems to exist a crude antithesis between Change and Value on the one side, and Permanence (*Dauer*) and Valuelessness on the other."[7]

The antithesis is not a new one. It is at least as old as pre-Socratic philosophy, and metaphysics has struggled with its conundrums ever since. It is the form in which it is accepted to-day, not only by technical philosophers like Mannheim, but as an unconscious assumption of popular philosophy, that makes it interesting and important for us. One might expect it, in its crudity, to have become out-dated; it seems to belong to the year 1910, with the pleasant essays of William James (as popular a writer for his time as are Eddington and Jeans in ours) and with the epidemic of Bergsonism.[8] But the course of events has led it to take less obvious forms. We cannot deny that the words (so impressive because of their association with physics) *static* and *dynamic* are popularly used almost always, the one disparagingly, the other eulogistically. We may have forgotten the philosophy of James, we may even sneer at the idea of "progress" (and perhaps "progress" has only become unfashionable because we have been able to qualify it as "Victorian"); but we are still over-valuing the changing and ignoring the permanent.[9] As Curtius remarks, the Permanent has come to mean Paralysis and Death.

One of the consequences, as it seems to me, of our failure to grasp the proper relation of the Eternal and the Transient, is our *over-estimation of the importance of our own time*. This is natural to an age which, whatever its professions, is still imbued with the doctrine of progress. The doctrine of progress cannot make the future seem to us more real than the present – this faith our senses bluntly deny; and a future in time, of infinite or indefinite extent, is something which we can by no means realize. But the doctrine of progress, while it can do little to make the future more real to us, has a very strong influence towards making the past less real to us. For it leads us to take for granted that the past, any part or the whole of it, has its meaning only in the present; leads us to ask of any past age, not what it has been in itself, not what the individuals composing it have made of themselves, but, what has that age done for *us*? If it has left us any inheritance that we still value, then that age is justified; and when we have ceased to value anything that the age has left us, then that age has come to appear to be just pure waste, and might as well have never existed. The values of a past age are right only so far as they serve the values of our own – whatever our values may happen to be; if our values happen to be those of an H. G. Wells, then a peculiar account of history ensues.[10] The notion that a past age or civilization might be great in itself, precious in the eye of God, because it succeeded in adjusting the delicate relation of the Eternal and the Transient, is completely alien to us. No age has been more ego-centric, so to speak, than our own; others have been ego-centric through ignorance, ours through complacent historical knowledge. Everything in the past was a necessary evil – evil in itself, but necessary because it led up to the present. Thus we take ourselves, and our transient affairs, too seriously.

I am here, of course, distinguishing very sharply the theoretic from the practical activity. In the practical activity, every living generation takes itself with equal seriousness; especially those members of it who have not enough to eat, or those who can get no work, and feel that they are superfluous; and all of us in so far as we live to struggle for anything whatever. We must, perforce, treat our own economic crisis as more serious in this sense than the decay of the Roman Empire, or the Black Death.[11] Those of us who do not understand technical matters must leave them to those who do; but we are at least as well entitled as the technicians to investigate to what extent our difficulties really are just technical and how far they are spiritual. And it may be that the *crise dans l'homme*[12] is all the more serious exactly because we take ourselves, theoretically, too seriously; because we have ignored the supernatural and the eternal.

Our preference for the changing over the permanent manifests itself in various details of life. One instance is a prevalent tendency in literary criticism: the tendency to treat each work of art, especially those contemporary with ourselves, as a manifestation of the spirit of the age.[13] The first-rate artist, the original writer, we say, is he who has most fully voiced this spirit; and when he has done this, he has done enough and has done all; our criticism consists in explaining what the spirit of the age is and how it is expressed in the writer's work. We are, in short, interested solely in ourselves, and the poet engages our attention merely by telling us about ourselves. Even as a practical instrument of valuation, this method is no very reliable one; for it will not show us how to distinguish between the great writer who has helped to create his time and the clever ape who is no more than the instantaneous mimic of its society manners. But even if it discriminated accurately, this attitude would still be mistaken. All great art is in a sense a document on its time; but great art is never merely a document, for mere documentation is not art. All great art has something permanent and universal about it, and reflects the permanent as well as the changing – a particular relation in time of the permanent and the transient. And as no great art is explicable simply by the society of its time, so it is not fully explicable simply by the personality of its author: in the greatest poetry there is always a hint of something behind, something impersonal, something in relation to which the author has been no more than the passive (if not always pure) medium. A good deal of brilliant criticism seems to me wasted labour just because it ignores the enduring in favour of the topical.

The problem for our time is, I think, still more complicated than as stated by Dr. Curtius. It is not simply the problem of realizing an exact and delicate relation between the various pairs of opposites; it is also a problem of realizing what each is. We have only to consider the communist Utopia. Here, it may be affirmed, we have a relation of "static" and "dynamic." The philosophy of change is here to be enjoyed with the utmost gusto. For, not only things do change, and must change by dialectical necessity, but we want them to change and can help them to change, much as a group of small boys will ostentatiously lend their hands when a couple of burly mechanics are pushing a broken down motor car. We thus gain a great access of vitality in assisting the inevitable. But we have the satisfaction of the static too, for we look forward to the consummation of the classless and government-less society, upon which, apparently, no further change is possible or necessary. But the believer in the values only of this world can only offer himself a dilemma. If the progress of mankind is to continue as long as man survives upon this earth, then, as I have said, progress becomes merely change; for the values of man will change, and a world of changed values is valueless to *us* – just as we, being a part of the past, will be valueless to *it*. Or if the progress of mankind is to continue only until a "perfect" state of society is reached, then this state of society will be valueless simply because of its perfection. It will be, at best, a smooth-running machine which runs without a purpose; an efficient bureaucracy with no meaning: and this it might well become. Does the bee in the efficient bee-hive find anything about it abhorrent or repulsive? No. Does it find anything to admire or aspire to? No. Of course any idea of earthly perfection must be static; to this extent the communist ideal is right. I remember many years ago hearing an eminent man of letters, now deceased, remark that he had just read Plato's "Republic," and hearing him criticize the Platonic ideal state as "too static."[14] It did not occur to me until too late to mention, that an "ideal state" *must* be an ideal of the *static*. But – apart from the fact that "justice" meant not quite the same thing to the Greek philosophers that it seems to mean to communists – the Greek ideal state was one in which each citizen could realize, according to his capacity, the highest values of art and religion: it was, as in the Christian conception, a state in which each citizen could *become* perfect. For we cannot banish *becoming* any more than we can banish *being*. *Estote perfecti*.[15]

It seems to me, accordingly, that the humane and civilized faith must comprehend all the others. We must believe, first, that the human race can, if it will, improve indefinitely; that it can improve both its material well-being and its spiritual capacities. We must also have a conception of a perfect society attainable on earth. And we must also admit the inadequacy of these ambitions and ideals. We must say that man, however he is improved by social and economic reorganization, by eugenics, and by any other external means possible to the science of intellect, will still be only the *natural* man, at an infinite remove from perfection.[16] And we must affirm that perfection is as nearly attainable for man here and now as it ever will be in any future in any place. That there can be no art *greater* than the art which has already been created: there will only be different and necessarily different combinations of the eternal and the changing in the forms of art. That men individually can never attain anything higher than has been already attained among the Saints; but that in any place, at any time, another Saint may be born. Such a just perception of the permanent relations of the Enduring and the Changing should on the one hand make us realize our own time in better proportion to times past and times to come: we are now inclined to think of our age and moment as hysterically as people did in the year 1000. And on the other hand it should help us to think better of our time, as not isolated or unique, and remind us that fundamentally our individual problems and duties are the same as they have been for others at any time – and equally our opportunities. What we can do towards the greatest material well-being of the greatest number is indeed of the utmost importance; but important only so long as we remember that the extent of our accomplishment can be only to remove obstacles in the way of individual self-improvement: such obstacles as want, insecurity, overwork and idleness.[17]

The death of Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson must be commemorated in the *Criterion*, for it matters not only to his friends and colleagues and all the successive generations at King's, but to everyone who sympathized – without necessarily sharing his views – with his courageous, humane and civilized attitude towards public affairs, with which his classical scholarship was in happy combination.[18] Death at his age is premature and painful for friends and admirers; but Dickinson always seemed – at least to one who knew him only casually over a period of some fifteen years – much younger than his age: he always was, and always would have been, so eagerly sympathetic and understanding towards young men and new writers. We hope to publish some appreciation in our next issue.[19]

We regret to discover that the name of one of the translators of the fragment of Hermann Broch's novel published in our last issue, Mrs. Willa Muir, was given incorrectly.[20]

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. TSE refers to Spengler's best seller, *The Decline of the West* (2 vols, 1918, 1922), in his Criterion "Commentary" for Aug 1927 (3.156).

2. Martin Heidegger (1889-1976), since 1928 Professor of Philosophy at Freiburg im Breisgau, author of *Sein und Zeit* [*Being and Time*] (1926). In a letter of 28 Mar 1931, TSE informed Stephen Spender: "There is a philosopher named Martin Heidegger – a disciple of the great Husserl, who really is good, I think, though far from lucid – whom I have been agonising over" (*L5* 529). Karl Heim (1874-1958), German theologian, Professor of Dogmatics at Münster, author of *The New Divine Order* (1930). In a report to the Faber book committee in 1935, TSE remarked of Heim's *Glaube und Denken* [Faith and Thought] that "I am sufficiently convinced of the merit of the book." Friedrich Gundolf (1880-1931), poet and literary scholar, formerly Professor at Heidelberg. TSE published Gundolf's essay on Eduard Mörike in the *Criterion* for July 1931 (682-708) and Scheler's essay on the "Future of Man" in Mar 1928 (100-119). TSE lamented Scheler's early death in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Sept 1928 (3.473).

3. Curtius published three essays in the *Criterion* (1923-27). TSE refers to *Balzac* (1923), *Marcel Proust* (1925), and *Französischer Geist im neuen Europa* (1925), translated into English by Olive Wyon as *The Civilization of France* (1930). On 27 Feb 1932, TSE wrote to Bruce Richmond: "Curtius is extremely incensed with Allen & Unwin over their treatment of the translation of his book *The Civilisation of France* which they have just published. He claims that he had no voice in choosing the translator who is a lady unknown to him and to his English friends."

4. José Ortega y Gasset (1888-1955), Professor of Metaphysics at Madrid University and since 1923 editor of *La Revista de Occidente*, author of *The Revolt of the Masses* (1932), a book which TSE recollected in "Book of the Year" (1958) "stirred and disturbed my mind so deeply." TSE attempted on several occasions to solicit an essay from Ortega for the *Criterion* without success, but he collaborated with *La Revista de Occidente* on a short-story competition in 1929-30 (4.3). Curtius translated Ortega's writings into German.

5. In chapter 5 "Humanismus als Initiative" ["Humanism as Initiative"], Curtius mounts a defense of a humanist model of education, inherited from Wilhelm von Humboldt, as a necessary antidote to Adolf Hitler's National Socialism.

6. Karl Mannheim (1893-1947), Hungarian-born sociologist, since 1930 Professor of Sociology at Goethe Frankfurt University, author of *Ideologie and Utopie* [*Ideology and Utopia*] (1929). TSE became personally acquainted with Mannheim after he fled Nazi Germany in 1933 to take up a position at the London School of Economics. From 1938-44, they were close associates in the ecumenical discussion group, the Moot, and TSE was instrumental in helping to secure Mannheim employment in the United Kingdom following the outbreak of World War II.

7. "Für viele heutige Denker freilich – und Mannheim zählt zu ihnen – scheint eine naïve Gleichsetzung zwischen Wechsel und Wert einerseits, zwischen Dauer und Unwert anderseits zu bestehen." *Deutscher Geist in Gefahr* (Stuttgart, Berlin: Deutsche-Verlags-Anstalt, 1932), 92.

8. TSE attended Bergson's public lectures at the Collège de France, 13 Jan-17 Feb 1911 and closed his Extension lectures of modern French literature with Bergson and "The Philosophy of 1910" (1.475).

9. In a graduate paper read to the Harvard Philosophical Club in 1914, TSE refers to "the alcoholic or stimulant value of the idea of Progress" (1.95).

10. Wells wrote a controversial bestselling three-volume *The Outline of History* (1920), followed by *A Short History of the World* (1922) with the aim of reforming the teaching of history in British schools. In "Popular Theologians" (1927), TSE comments: "Mr. Wells has not an historical mind; he has a prodigious gift of historical imagination, which is comparable to Carlyle's, but this is quite a different gift from the understanding of history. *That* demands a degree of culture, civilization and maturity which Mr. Wells does not possess" (3.64).

11. TSE alludes to Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776-88). On 9 Apr 1926, TSE told Richard Aldington that "I find that a chapter of Gibbon acts on me like a very powerful drug" (*L3* 130). The Black Death was a devastating pandemic which reached its peak in the mid-fourteenth century.

12. *crise dans l'homme*: crisis within man

13. *The Spirit of the Age; or, Contemporary Portraits* (1825) is a series of character sketches of radical authors by the essayist William Hazlitt.

14. In "Recent British Periodical Literature in Ethics" (1918), TSE considers contemporary interpretations of Plato's Republic (1.660).

15. Matthew 5:48 (from the Latin Vulgate of the Sermon on the Mount) "estote ergo vos perfecti sicut et Pater vester caelestis perfectus est": "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." Matthew Arnold used "estote ergo vos perfecti" as the epigraph to *Culture and Anarchy* (1869).

16. In "The Search for Moral Sanction" (1932), TSE considers a similar tendency in communism and eugenics: "the pursuit of the mirage of the Earthly Paradise – the illusion that we can be made happy and perfect by the application of legislation or force of the results of scientific discovery" (4.450). In a letter of 8 Apr 1931, TSE challenged George Pitt-Rivers, in the course of rejecting for publication his pamphlet on eugenics: "what qualities are desirable or not to breed for? and as not all good qualities can co-exist in the same individual, how are they to be distributed? is there no danger, in eliminating the unfit, of eliminating the exceptional genius as

well, and reducing mankind to uniformity? is it possible at the present stage to discriminate with certainty between true Eugenics and false?" (*L5* 539).

17. TSE alludes to Jeremy Bentham's Utilitarian formula: "The greatest happiness of the greatest number is the foundation of morals and legislation." *The Works of Jeremy Bentham*, vol 10 (Edinburgh: William Tait, 1843), 142.

18. Goldsworthy Lowes Dickinson (1862-1932), Fellow of King's College, Cambridge. TSE included Dickinson's *The Greek View of Life* in his 1913 Harvard course, Philosophy A (1.778) and made his acquaintance in 1916 through members of the Bloomsbury Group. Dickinson was a liberal pacifist who helped to found the League of Nations. He studied Classics as an undergraduate at King's and lectured in political science at Cambridge and the London School of Economics.

19. On 23 Aug 1932, TSE commissioned an article on Dickinson from E. M. Forster, Dickinson's close friend and future biographer. It did not appear, but Nathaniel Wedd's tribute "Goldie Dickinson: The Latest Cambridge Platonist" was published in the *Criterion* for Jan 1933 (175-83).

20. "Disintegration of Values," *Criterion*, 11 (July 1932), 664-75, a translation of two sections from Hermann Broch's novel *Die Schlafwandler* [*The Sleepwalkers*] (1930-32) was erroneously attributed to "Edwin and Christina Muir" (675). On 2 July 1932, TSE wrote to Scottish novelist and translator Willa Muir (1890-1970) to apologize for this mistake.

Hermann Broch (1886-1951), Austrian writer of Jewish parentage, who was imprisoned by the Nazis but eventually settled in the United States. On 25 July 1934, TSE wrote to Broch to solicit another contribution to the *Criterion* explaining that "I have read most of your essays with great interest and sympathy, and admire their quality." No further contributions appeared in the *Criterion*, but Broch published a German translation of TSE's poem "Morning at the Window" in 1936.

A Testimonial for *The Cantos of Ezra Pound*: *Some Testimonies* by Ernest Hemingway, Ford Madox Ford, T. S. Eliot, Hugh Walpole, Archibald MacLeish, James Joyce and Others

New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1933. Pp. 22; "From T. S. Eliot," 16-17[1]

I don't think that the publication of Ezra's *Cantos* in this country needs any word from me or from anybody else. It is rather an impertinence. There was a time when it did not seem unfitting for me to write a pamphlet, *Ezra Pound, His Poetry and Metric* but Ezra was then known only to a few and I was so completely unknown that it seemed more decent that the pamphlet should appear anonymously.[2] I owe too much to Ezra to be a critic. (I wish that the manuscript of *The Waste Land* with Ezra's criticisms and still more important, his excisions, thank God he reduced a mess of some eight hundred lines to about half its size, might some day be exhumed. John Quinn had it.[3] As a masterpiece of critical literature.) I have preached the *Cantos* for some years now to young practitioners as well as tried to tell them what I owed to Pound in London, Paris, Excideuil and Rapallo.[4] (It shall not all be told.) One result is that – I blame no one – my copy of the *Cantos* had disappeared and I want them to be re-published so that I may have another copy. I find that, with the exception of *Mauberley*, there is no other contemporary – with disrespect for none, for I include myself – whom I ever want to re-read for pleasure.[5]

NOTES

1. On 13 Aug 1932, Ford Madox Ford invited TSE to contribute a testimonial in support of the forthcoming first American edition of Pound's *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (1933). TSE's testimonial, dated 1 Dec 1932, was composed at Harvard. Fifteen testimonials were collected and issued in pamphlet form for free distribution in connection with Farrar and Rinehart's publication of Pound's *A Draft of XXX Cantos* in Mar 1933. The "Editor's Note" by "D. C." (i.e., "Daniel Chaucer" – Ford's pseudonym) describes TSE as "the revolutionary become Doctor" (4).

2. *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry*, published anonymously in 1917 by Alfred A. Knopf in New York (1.626).

3. TSE gave the manuscript drafts of *The Waste Land* to his benefactor John Quinn in Jan 1923. They were sold to the Berg Collection of the New York Public Library in 1958 and first published in Valerie Eliot's edition of *WLF* in 1971.

4. In Aug 1919, TSE stayed with Pound in Excideuil in the Dordogne region of southwest France. In Canto 29, Pound records their visit to the castle ruins, where TSE ("Arnaut"), observing the wave pattern cut in the spire of St. Thomas, startled Pound by saying, "I am afraid of the life after death." Pound settled in Rapallo in the Liguria region of northern Italy in 1924. TSE paid a visit to him there in Jan 1926 after a rest cure and the drafting of his Clark Lectures in La Turbie, in the Alpes Maritimes.

5. In his introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems* (1928), TSE described *Hugh Selywn Mauberley* (1920) as "much the finest poem, I believe, before the *Cantos*" (3.522). In a letter to F. R. Leavis of 17 Feb 1932, TSE responded to Leavis's chapter on Pound in *New Bearings in English Poetry* (1932): "I am particularly delighted by your praise of 'Hugh Selwyn Mauberley' which is as you say a great poem. I admit that I think much more highly of the Cantos than you do, but there we may both be wrong, and time and the completion of that poem, if it is ever completed, will show. But I confess I did feel bewildered by what seems to be a lack of any central conviction or even the search for a conviction in Pound's work."

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 12 (Jan 1933) 244-49

Writing from a country in which communistic theories appear to have more vogue among men of letters than they have yet reached in England, I have recently looked at two books which discuss the relation of literature to social affairs.[1] One is not very new; Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* was first published in translation in 1925, and has since become a text-book for revolutionary litterateurs. The other, Mr. Calverton's *Liberation of American Literature*, is pretty fresh from the mint.[2] The former is much shorter and of course more important. It is natural, and not necessarily convincing, to find young intellectuals in New York turning to communism, and turning their communism to literary account.[3] The literary profession is not only, in all countries, overcrowded and underpaid (the few overpaid being chiefly persons who have outlived their influence, if they ever had any); it is embarrassed by such a number of ill-trained people doing such a number of unnecessary jobs, and writing so many unnecessary books and unnecessary reviews of unnecessary books, that it has much ado to maintain its dignity as a profession at all. One is almost tempted to form the opinion that the world is at a stage at which men of letters are a superfluity. To be able therefore to envisage literature under a new aspect, to take part in the creation of a new art and new standards of literary criticism, to be provided with a whole stock of ideas and of words, that is for a writer in such circumstances to be given a new lease of life. It is not always easy, of course, in the ebullitions of a new movement, to distinguish the man who has received the living word from the man whose access of energy is the result of being relieved of the necessity of thinking for himself. Men who have stopped thinking make a powerful force. There are obvious inducements, besides that – never wholly absent – of simple conversion, to entice the man of letters into political and social theory which he then employs to revive his sinking fires and rehabilitate his profession.

There is no such obvious reason why a man like Trotsky should take the trouble to pronounce upon the literature of revolution and the literature of the future; the only reason that occurs to me in reading his book is that he may have been exasperated by the futilities of previous Russian writers upon the subject. He is certainly a man of first-rate intelligence, expressing himself in a rough and ready metaphorical style, and he utters a good deal of sound sense. Most of his book is devoted to the criticism of authors whom I have not read, and who I imagine have not been translated and never will be; but as an antidote to the false art of revolution his treatise is admirable.[4]

The faith of Trotsky, however, in the possibilities of Marxian literature, has about it something very touching – still more touching than that of Mr. Calverton. The early champions of the Christian Faith, one remembers, often adopted a very different attitude towards literature and art in general. No attempt was made to conciliate or to seduce the literary world. Eminent literary conversions were not then received with a burst of applause because of their advertisement value. Classical authors fared more hardly than any dead writers are likely to fare in reputation under the rule of Marxian criticism; and the fathers of the young Church did not feel any pressing need for literature and art as evidence of the truth of Christianity. Those manifestations followed in due course. They are never likely to reappear any more quickly than they did then. Trotsky is quite aware – more aware than his compatriots seem to have been before he wrote his book – of the difference between literature written in and for a period of revolution, and literature produced by a people which has gone through a revolution, and he seems to understand that the first is unlikely to have any permanent value; but he seems to feel, in common with other communists, an impatience for the latter to appear.[5]

I can agree with Mr. Trotsky up to a point. "The proletariat," he says, "has to have in art the expression of the new spiritual[6]* point of view which is just beginning to be formulated within him, and to which art must help him give form" [171]. If we assume for the moment that the revolution is to take place, and that the final classless society will appear, then I concede the possibility that great works of art in new forms will subsequently appear too; I disbelieve, not only that the new art will be any better than the art of all the past, but that the new art will owe its life to communism. The chances for art are no better than out of any other possible development of society, and are not improved by a flood of anticipatory criticism. I certainly prefer the greatest Christian art to the greatest art of pagan times, before or since, but I do not believe that because it is Christian art it is greater art. What would happen, at best, under a wholly new dispensation, would be that the artist would have his material given him, and would be so inoculated with communism as to be able to ignore it. Christian apologists have not, those who have been serious and qualified, cited Christian art as an apology for Christianity. From the point of view of art, if there is such a point of view, Christianity was merely a change, a provision of a new world with new material; from the point of view of communism as of Christianity, art and literature are strictly irrelevant.

There is a great deal more to the difference, however, than a mere change of mental categories. Both Mr. Trotsky and Mr. Calverton speak as if you had only to adopt the categories of communism, and after that, if you were an artist, you would be able to devote your attention to questions of "form." Mr. Trotsky says:

> It is unquestionably true that the need for art is not created by economic conditions. But neither is the need for food created by economics. On the contrary, the need for food and warmth creates economics. It is very true that one cannot always go by the principles of Marxism in deciding whether to reject or to accept a work of art. A work of art should, in the first place, be judged by its own law, that is, by the law of art. But Marxism alone can explain why and how a given tendency in art has originated in a given period of history; in other words, who it was who made a demand for such an artistic form and not for another, and why. . . . Materialism does not deny the significance of form, either in logic, jurisprudence, or art. [178-179]

And Mr. Calverton:

> The revolutionary proletarian critic does not aim to underestimate literary craftsmanship. What he contends is simply that literary craftsmanship is not enough. The craftsmanship must be utilized to create objects of revolutionary meaning. [460]

Now, this is all quite praiseworthy, so far as it goes, but I find it difficult to apply in comprehensive criticism of any great piece of literature of the past: what was the "meaning" of a play of Shakespeare which corresponds to the "revolutionary meaning" of the art of the future? the "meaning" which it must have or must have had, if we are to regard it as anything more than the "literary craftsmanship" which is not enough? If Marxism explains why and how a given tendency in history originated, such as the tendency for Shakespeare's plays to be written, and who it was who made a demand for such an artistic form as that of *Antony and Cleopatra*,[7] and if everything else is "literary craftsmanship" (an accomplishment in which Mr. Calverton is not notably proficient), then there seems to me to be a good deal left to explain.[8] Mr. Calverton, in fact, does leave a great deal, for throughout his book on American literature everything is explained except the genius of the greater men of letters, who do not, on the whole, receive very much of his attention. They are "explained" by their environment, and their genius, apparently, is just a genius for literary craftsmanship.

I should suppose it to be desirable that every country shall provide an environment in which its best minds can flourish; it also seems desirable that these best minds should come to terms with their environment; but it is possible also that some amount of maladaptation is desirable. Hawthorne was apparently adapted to the past of America rather than to its future; but it is just possible that this retrospective inclination suited Hawthorne's peculiar spiritual qualities. If Mr. Calverton had treated Poe as a case of maladaptation, and Emerson as a case of excessive adaptation, the results might have been interesting.[9] But the spectacle of the individual in conflict with the dominant tendencies and prejudices of his time, and consequently that of the individual in conflict with the dominant prejudices and tendencies of the coming time, does not influence critics like Mr. Calverton in favour of the individual.

There are also people who, while recognizing the interest of the work of literature as a document upon the ideas and the sensibility of its epoch, and recognizing even that the permanent work of literature is one which does not lack this interest, yet cannot help valuing literary work, like philosophical work, in the end by its transcendence of the limits of its age; by its breaking through the categories of thought and sensibility of its age; by its speaking, in the language of its time and in the imagery of its own tradition, the word which belongs to no time. Art, we feel, aspires to the condition of the timeless; and communist art, according to the sentence of those who would foretell what it is to be, is bound to the temporal.[10]

> It is the decay of the whole middle class way of existence, that of the upper bourgeoisie as well as the petty bourgeoisie, which has robbed the contemporary writer in Europe as well as in America of his faith in life, and left him without beliefs or convictions. [475]

(What faith in life may be I know not; I might inform Mr. Calverton that, for the Christian, faith in death is what matters.) He continues:

> The sickness and sham which underlay the nature of middle-class life is no longer concealed from him. [475]

It was no doubt the sickness and sham which underlay the nature of Pharisee and Sadducee life that, being no longer concealed from the writers of the Gospels, left them without beliefs or convictions, and with a less polished prose style than that of Mr. Calverton or that of Mr. Murry.[11] And yet we persist in believing that Confucius and Plato, Homer and Shakespeare, even though "their faith was founded upon a false premise; fitting and persuasive enough in their generation" [480], have yet something to say to every future generation if it will listen, no matter how many future generations there may be to come.[12]

In matters of aesthetics the Christian theorist is in a position of unfair terms with the communist, of which he is not slow to take advantage. He is able to recognize an inconsistency in the affairs of this world, even to admitting the possibility that a man might be a communist, an orthodox Marxian dialectician, in our time, in this very year and month, and yet write decent English prose; even that such a one might be a great poet. He might even derive pleasure and instruction from the man's poetry. But the Marxian is compelled to scorn delights, even such moderate ecstasies as may be provoked by the reading of Emerson's Essays, and live laborious days in deciding what art ought to be.[13] For this knowledge of literature he is obliged to apply himself; not to the furtive and facile pleasures of Homer and Virgil – the former a person of doubtful identity and citizenship, the latter a sycophantic supporter of a middle-class imperialist dynasty[14] – but to the arduous study of Ernest Hemingway and John Dos Passos; and the end of his precipitous ascent will be an appreciation of the accomplishment of Sam Ornitz, Lester Cohen, and Granville Hicks.[15]*

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. TSE arrived in the United States in Sept 1932 to take up the Charles Eliot Norton Professorship of Poetry at Harvard University.

2. *Literature and Revolution*, trans. Rose Strunsky (London: Allen and Unwin, 1925). In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Jan 1925, TSE complains of the "dreary picture" of cultural life depicted in Trotsky's *Problems of Life* (1924) (2.569). V. F. Calverton, *The Liberation of American Literature* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1932). Calverton (1900-40) – born George Goetz – American Marxist literary critic, since 1923 founding editor of *The Modern Quarterly*. TSE rejected a number of essays submitted by Calverton to the *Criterion*. On 22 May 1928, in

the course of rejecting an article, TSE wrote to Calverton: "I must say that I have been very much interested in *The Modern Quarterly*, and in your own work, and I hope that you will let me see more of the latter later" (*L4* 166).

3. At this time, New York boasted several prominent pro-Communist literary-intellectual journals. Aside from Calverton's *The Modern Quarterly* (from 1933 *The Modern Monthly*), *The New Masses* was closely linked with the American Communist Party. *Partisan Review*, founded in 1934, became the home of a group of New York intellectuals indebted to Trotsky's writings.

4. In the notes to *UPUC* (1933), TSE remarks of *Literature and Revolution*: "The major part of Trotsky's book is not very interesting for those who are unacquainted with the modern Russian authors: one suspects that most of Trotsky's swans are geese" (4.683, n.35). Trotsky organizes his study around several groups and schools: Andrei Biely and the "pre-revolutionary" writers; Alexander Blok and revolutionary "fellow-travelers"; Vladimir Mayakovsky and the Futurist poets; Viktor Shklovsky and the Formalist critics.

5. Trotsky writes: "If a line were extended from present art to the Socialist art of the future, one would say that we have hardly now passed through the stage of even preparing for its preparation" (12).

6*. TSE's note: "One would like to penetrate Mr. Trotsky's conception of 'the spiritual.'"

7. Trotsky claims that Shakespearean tragedy "would be entirely unthinkable without the Reformation" (242).

8. On 6 Oct 1934, TSE complained in a letter to D. G. Bridson that Calverton "can't write English, he doesn't know anything, and I don't believe he has any standing in America among Communists or any other people."

9. In "American Literature" (1919), TSE discusses the literature of Hawthorne, Poe, and Emerson in relation to their American background (2.21).

10. TSE alludes to Walter Pater's dictum: "*All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music.*" *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1893), 105.

11. Pharisee (OED): "A member of a religious party within Judaism between the 2nd cent. b.c. and New Testament times, distinguished by its rigorous interpretation and observance of the written Mosaic Law as well as the traditions of the elders." Sadducee (OED): "A member of a religious party within Judaism between the 2nd cent. b.c. and New Testament times, which, in opposition to the Pharisees, denied the resurrection of the dead, the immortality of the soul, the existence of angels, and the authority of the Mosaic oral tradition, emphasizing the primacy of the written Law." TSE criticizes Murry's idiosyncratic espousal of communism in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1932 (4.456).

12. In *The Liberation of American Literature*, the quotation from Calverton is applied to Emerson and Whitman.

13. Calverton criticizes Emerson's essays from a Marxist point of view. In a letter of 24 Apr 1934, TSE declined Janet Adam Smith's invitation to give a talk on American literature, observing: "I am not a very good person to talk about Emerson, as I dislike him and his works."

14. TSE refers to controversy surrounding the identity of Homer and to the social origins of Virgil's patron, the Emperor Augustus, who was born into a plebeian family.

15*. TSE's note: "*The Liberation of American Literature*, p. 479. By V. F. Calverton, author of *Sex Expression in Literature* [1926] and *Bankruptcy of Marriage* [1928] which has been translated into eight languages and used in leading universities in London (ask Mr. Laski), Berlin and Tokyo. Scribners. $3.75."

For TSE's critique of Harold Laski, lecturer in political science at the London School of Economics, see his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Oct 1931 (4.354).

In "Whitman and Tennyson" (1926), TSE refers to the "America of Mr. Scott Fitzgerald, or Mr. Dos Passos, or Mr. Hemingway – to name some of the more interesting of contemporary American writers" (2.878). Samuel Ornitz (1890-1957), left-wing American screenwriter and novelist, contributor to the *New Masses*; Lester Cohen (1901-63), left-wing American novelist and playwright. In 1948, TSE advised Harriet Shaw Weaver to turn down an approach from Lester Cohen to produce a screenplay of *Ulysses*. In Sept 1932, Ornitz, Cohen, Hicks, and Dos Passos signed the Communist League pledge to support William Foster at the US elections. On 27 Feb 1936, TSE responded to Granville Hicks's inquiry regarding the Communist activist John Reed, a Harvard classmate of TSE who had died in Moscow in 1920: "I don't remember that Reed was very much interested in politics or economics at the time, and I am sure that I was not." In 1929, TSE wrote to the editor of *The Forum* to comment on Hicks's article on "decency" in modern literature (3.582).

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 12 (Apr 1933) 468-73

I do not know whether a book called *The Ironic Temper*, by Haakon Chevalier (whose name was previously unknown to me) has been published in London or not.[1] It is a book worth reading, and also one that inspires the kind of reflexions appropriate to the literary form of these commentaries, if they have a form. Its primary aim is what the title affirms, a study of the ironic temper; it is, incidentally, a very sympathetic and understanding analysis of Anatole France.

The book is a study of a temper and a temperature which the author believes to belong to the past, which in Anatole France reach their culmination. It is therefore by implication a study of the "modern temper" as well; and Mr. Chevalier makes, by the way, some shrewd and destructive criticisms of the book by Mr. Joseph Wood Krutch, *The Modern Temper*, which was widely noticed a few years ago.[2] Being at present engaged in the attempt to give a course of lectures on contemporary literature, I feel that the modern temper is something that I ought to inform myself about; and it is with this aspect of the book, rather than with Mr. Chevalier's very able analysis of the ironic temper, as exemplified by Anatole France, that I am concerned.[3] Mr. Chevalier, observes in his introduction:

> Anatole France's generation still lived under the spell of the past. The everywhere (*sic*) visible contrasts between the past and the present formed rich soil for the growth of Irony; and the prevailing mood of reminiscent piety allowed pity also to flourish. Hemingway's generation has lost that sense of the past. "Irony and Pity." Meaningless words. There is no irony, because there is no complex interplay of concepts and beliefs casting ambiguous shadows over human affairs. There is no Pity: no sense of value attaches to pain and defeat to throw them into emotional relief.
>
> Irony and Pity are foreign alike to ages of faith and to an age like our own, to which the loss of faith, if not the lack of it, is not a matter of acute concern. [5-6]

To generalize about the present is a dangerous business; unsafe as predicting the future. Mr. Chevalier is by no means unaware of the dangers; he adds, "when we differentiate our own generation from that of Anatole France we are drawing, possibly, a fine line of distinction of which the future will take no account" [7]. Certainly, France is one of those writers who do represent for us the age which is past.[4] Perhaps his remoteness from us might be expressed in terms other than that of Irony – though for Mr. Chevalier, of course, Irony means the ironic temper, and not the polemic irony which is a permanent weapon for the sensitive civilized man. What we rebel against is neither the use of irony against definite men, institutions or abuses, nor is it the use (as by Jules Laforgue) to express a *dédoublement* of the personality against which the subject struggles.[5] It is the use of irony to give the appearance of a philosophy of life, as something final and not instrumental, that leaves us now indifferent; it seems to us an evasion of the difficulty of living, where it pretends to be a kind of solution of it. And the work built upon it comes to seem merely superfluous, an encumbrance, a luxury article produced for a public that has disappeared.

Our time (but possibly when we say our time we mean ourselves and perhaps a few friends) is impatient of the superfluous and the complicated. The international situations, the elaborate complications in which many of Henry James's problems involve themselves, now seem remote; what is not remote is his curious search, often in the oddest places, like country houses, for spiritual life.[6] And in Anatole France we find, I think, a kind of pretentiousness which is unendurable. He appears before us, with his long row of books, as a popular entertainer, and a very good entertainer he is; but the sad thing is to find that an essential trick of the entertainment is to impress us with a profound worldly wisdom, sapping all other philosophies, and a sophistication with which he flatters us by making us feel that we share it. The flattery is turned to fraud when we realize how shallow is his philosophy, how puny and defensive is his sophistication. Like good breeding, sophistication is a quality to be dissimulated; when it is paraded, it becomes childish. Nor is disillusion possible as an end in itself; for when it becomes an end, it is paraded, and that again is childish and ill bred. The man who is properly disillusioned is almost unconscious of the fact; and he knows that it is childish to let his mind dwell upon the things he no longer believes in; and that it is adult to believe in something and occupy his mind with that. And Mr. Chevalier does very well elicit the fact that Anatole France was always a precocious child. Many men of great ability are inefficient in practical detail, and even weak of will; but France's mind was actually an arrested one.

Anatole France of the French Academy is not the sole example of arrested development; and since the past and the present overlap as do the present and the future, we may cite here M. André Gide. What a superb philosophy he offered to adolescents![7] It was more up to date than Anatole France's; it was for the time when men ten years younger than myself were young. We should learn to suspect those who, like France and M. Gide, write at their best or almost best when they write about their childhood. We should also learn that one kind of sham is offered to the public when *decadence* is in vogue, and another when *revolution* is in vogue; and that they may be at bottom the same old sham: just a defence organization by timid and undeveloped men who have a talent for writing. I hope that Mr. Aldous Huxley will not write about his infancy.[8] M. Gide, as I say, has stepped it up. Instead of the sophistication of the man who knows all about the past, who has understood all philosophies and faiths and seen through them, infinitely learned, infinitely "intelligent" (magic word), and infinitely weary, weary; instead of that kind of humbug he offered us the sophistication of the daring mind, freed from all prejudices and inhibitions (how that word fatigues one!), exploring all possibilities, willing to try anything – the slave, not of the past, but of the future. M. Gide, I imagine, has a smaller public than France had; but he has all the public there is; as large a public, I dare say, as France would have had if he had been the contemporary of M. Gide. The essential point is not how large a public one writes for; the essential point is whether one writes for a public at all. And M. Gide does definitely write to be read. In this he seems to me to differ from Montaigne.[9] It is usually possible to tell the difference between the letters of people who write for their correspondent and those of people who write, not forgetting that their letters may be preserved, and after preservation, published.[10] And after all, it is not difficult to be sophisticated. One only needs to be born a little later than some other eminent person. France is more sophisticated than Renan. Gide is more sophisticated than France. For Mr. Huxley, as I suggested, the future is still open. The most lamentable case of sophistication in this island was perhaps Lytton Strachey.[11]

In America, this pseudo – or not quite good mannered sophistication takes the form of what they call hard boiling.[12] To each climate its own illusion; but the illusion which pervades the whole various-climated American continent is the illusion of the hard boiled. Even Mr. Ernest Hemingway – that writer of tender sentiment, and true sentiment, as in *The Killers* and *A Farewell to Arms* (I am told that Mr. Hemingway refused to look at the

Film which was produced under the same title) has been taken as the representative of hard boiling.[13] Hard boiling is, of course, only another defence-mechanism adopted by the world's babies; if the Chinese bandits ever discover that they are hard boiled I shall have to infer that the oldest civilization in the world has reverted to the condition of puerility.[14] Mr. Hemingway is a writer for whom I have considerable respect; he seems to me to tell the truth about his own feelings at the moment when they exist. He does not belong in the class in which I have placed France, and Gide, and (tentatively) Mr. Aldous Huxley. He has, at the moment, a popularity which I think (it is a high compliment) is largely undeserved.

To any writer, once he has attained a certain notoriety, comes temptation. Any writer, after he arrives at some success, has to discriminate between three classes of friends: those who care for him, those who care for his work, and those who care only for his reputation. The first class is, of course, the smallest, yet it may overlap the second. I think that I may say, on behalf of those who write, that the distinction between the second and the third class is usually painfully evident. Any writer, who arrives at some success, discriminates between three classes of disciples: those who will go the whole way with him (number usually zero); those who will go part of the way with him; and, lastly, those who will adopt some catchword and go in the opposite direction. Ordinarily, one knows that a Leader may be defined as that one of the Gadarene Swine which runs the fastest.[15] But the real Leader is the one who does not look back to see whether there are any followers. Perhaps D. H. Lawrence lived long enough to discover that he had none.[16]

Communism – I mean the ideas of communism, not the reality, which would be of no use in this way – has come as a godsend (so to speak) to those young people who would like to grow up and believe in something. Once they have committed themselves, they must find (if they are honest, and growing) that they have let themselves in for all the troubles that afflict the person who believes in something. I speak of those who are moved by the desire to be possessed by a conviction, rather than by the obvious less laudable motives which make a man believe that he has a belief. They have joined that bitter fraternity which lives on a higher level of doubt; no longer the doubting which is just play with ideas, on the level of a France or of a Gide, but that which is a daily battle.[17] The only end to the battle, if we live to the end, is holiness; the only escape is stupidity, and stupidity, for the majority of people, is no doubt the best solution of the difficulty of thinking; it is far better to be stupid in a faith, even in a stupid faith, than to be stupid and believe nothing. For the smaller number, the first step is to find the least incredible belief and live with it for some time; and that in itself is uncomfortable; but in time we come to perceive that everything else is still more uncomfortable. Everyone, in a sense, believes in something; for every action involving any moral decision implies a belief; but a formulated belief is better, because more conscious, than an unformulated or informulable one. And, on the other hand, a belief which is *merely* a formulation of the way in which one acts has no validity; unless it turns and compels action of certain kinds in certain circumstances it has no status. Anatole France had his "philosophy of life," if you like; but a philosophy of life which involves no sacrifice turns out in the end to be merely an excuse for being the sort of person that one is. I have, in consequence of these reflexions, much sympathy with communists of the type with which I am here concerned; I would even say that, as it is the faith of the day, there are only a small number of people living who have achieved the right *not* to be communists.[18] My only objection to it is the same as my objection to the cult of the Golden Calf. It is better to worship a golden calf than to worship nothing; but that, after all, is not, in the circumstances, an adequate excuse.[19] My objection is that it just happens to be mistaken.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. *The Ironic Temper: Anatole France and his Time* (New York: Oxford UP, 1932). Haakon M. Chevalier (1901-85), professor of French literature at the University of California, Berkeley.

2. *The Modern Temper: A Study and a Confession* (London: J. Cape, 1930) presents a cultural critique of the impact of science and technology from a humanist point of view. Chevalier disputes Krutch's claim to speak on behalf of the modern generation: "He discusses at length recent philosophic ideas, the latest psychology and new scientific discoveries and theories; yet his 'temper' is not generated, nor even appreciably affected, by anything that has happened within the last fifty years" (8-9).

Joseph Wood Krutch, journalist and cultural critic, regular contributor to the *Nation* (New York), and teacher at Brooklyn Polytechnic. On 20 Apr, Krutch attended a dinner held in honor of TSE at the New School of Social Research, New York.

3. Between 7 Feb and 4 May, TSE taught an undergraduate course at Harvard University, "English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day" (4.758). The course included discussion of Anatole France, with reference to Chevalier's book (4.760, n.8; 764, n.25).

4. In a letter to the *Church Times* (25 Nov 1927), TSE described Anatole France (who died in 1924) as a "partially pernicious influence" on a generation of French thinkers (3.291).

5. *dédoublement*: splitting. In his Turnbull lecture of 3 Feb, TSE discusses the conflict in Laforgue's poetry between thought and feeling, observing: "Laforgue's irony, as in his fine prose

Hamlet in the volume called *Moralités Légendaires*, an irony employed against himself, ensues from the conflict" (4.743).

6. In *English Hours*, Henry James writes: "Of all the great things that the English have invented and made part of the credit of the national character, the most perfect, the most characteristic, the only one they have mastered completely in all its details, so that it becomes a compendious illustration of their social genius and their manners, is the well-appointed, well-administered, well-filled country house" (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1905), 154. TSE set a number of his works, notably *The Family Reunion* and *The Cocktail Party*, in an English country-house setting.

7. TSE recommended to the Faber book committee Montgomery Belgion's attack on Gide's "philosophy of life" in *Our Present Philosophy of Life*, which Faber published in 1929.

8. Gide writes about his life up until the death in 1895 of his mother in *Si le grain ne meurt* [*If It Die*] (1924). Anatole France provides fictionalized accounts of his Parisian childhood in *Le Livre de mon ami* [*My Friend's Book*] (1885), *Pierre Nozière* (1899), *Le Petit Pierre* (1918), and *La Vie en fleur* [*The Bloom of Life*] (1922). TSE dined with Aldous Huxley in New York in Apr.

9. In "The *Pensées* of Pascal" (1931) TSE refers to Montaigne's reflections on the individual subject in his *Essais* (1580), but he continues: "The picture of Montaigne which offers itself first to our eyes, that of the original and independent solitary 'personality,' absorbed in amused analysis of himself, is deceptive" (4.344).

10. TSE lectured on "English Poets as Letter Writers" at Yale University on 23 Feb (4.846).

11. In his second Turnbull lecture of 1 Feb, TSE described Renan, Anatole France, Gide, and Aldous Huxley as "voluptuaries of thought" (4.735). On 3 Feb 1929, TSE explained to his mother that Lytton Strachey's books "are bought by many people because they think it is the last word in intellectual writing; and as it is really very easy to read they think it proves that they are very intellectual themselves" (*L4* 412).

12. hard-boiled (OED): "Hardened, callous; hard-headed, shrewd. *orig*. U.S."

13. The 1932 screen adaptation of *A Farewell to Arms* (directed by Frank Borzage) was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Picture.

14. TSE echoes Allen Tate's unfavorable review of *The Sun Also Rises*: "It is not that Mr. Hemingway is, in the term which he uses in fine contempt for the big word, hard-boiled; it is that he is not hard-boiled enough, in the artistic sense." "Hard-Boiled," *The Nation* (15 Dec 1926), 642.

15. Travelling in Gadara, Jesus came upon a man possessed by demons. He exorcised the demons from the man, transforming them into a herd of swine on a nearby mountainside. The herd then ran into the sea and was drowned (Luke 8:26-33; Matthew 8:28-32; Mark 5:1-13).

16. In his review of John Middleton Murry's biography of Lawrence, *Son of Woman* (1931), TSE refers to Murry and Aldous Huxley as Lawrence's "two principal disciples" (4.315).

17. In "The *Pensées* of Pascal" (1931), TSE praises Pascal for "facing unflinchingly the demon of doubt which is inseparable from the spirit of belief" (4.345).

18. In his broadcast lecture "Christianity and Communism" (1932), TSE contends: "Nor will you succeed in inventing another brand new religion to compete with communism. There can only be the two, Christianity and communism: and there, if you like, is your dilemma. . . . at present every Christian, and especially the Christian layman, who leaves far too much of the intellectual burden to his spiritual advisers, must be concerned with the realization of a

Christian view of social and economic organization. It is the only alternative to communism" (4.424, 428-29).

19. Exodus 32: When Moses climbed Mount Sinai to receive the Ten Commandments, the Israelites began to worship a golden calf. On his return, Moses, angered by the worship of this idol, threw down the two tablets of stone, breaking them, before burning the golden calf.

Critical Note to *The Collected Poems of Harold Monro*, ed. Alida Monro, with a biographical sketch by F. S. Flint

London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1933. Pp. 217; "Critical," xiii-xvi[1]

If we considered the poetry of Harold Monro, as it is natural to do, from an historical point of view, we should see him isolated between the "Georgian" poets of one decade and the more "modern" poets of another.[2†] The historical point of view, especially when we are concerned with our immediate predecessors and our contemporaries, is largely impersonal; that is to say, it tends to emphasise what a man has in common with others, in subject matter, in manner of style and technique, in his social background and assumptions. It also judges men according to what is taken to be their influence, or their importance in the main current. Such an attitude is bound to be unfair to the reputation of such a poet as Monro. What he contributed is hardly to be considered either in close relation to the work of the earlier generation or to that of the later.

Technically, certainly, he was not an innovator. It is a poet's business to be original, in all that is comprehended by "technique," only so far as is absolutely necessary for saying what he has to say; only so far as is dictated, not by the idea – for there is no idea – but by the nature of that dark embryo within him which gradually takes on the form and speech of a poem. Monro's style developed and changed, of course; like that of any other writer who is of serious interest. His later manner is more like that of his younger contemporaries than like that of his elder contemporaries; but this is not due, I think, to any influence from without, but to the needs of the matter to be said.[3†] But with Georgian poetry he had little in common.[4] Of that poetry I speak with much diffidence. What I remember of it is a small number of poems by two or three men. I supposed, long ago, that Harold Monro's poetry belonged in this category – with the poetry of writers not unfairly representable in anthologies; and in those days I was interested only in the sort of thing I wanted to do myself, and took no interest in what diverged from my own directions. But his poetry differs from Georgian verse proper in important respects. The majority of those writers occupied themselves with subject matter which is – and not in the best sense – impersonal; which belongs to the sensibility of the ordinary sensitive person, not primarily only to that of the sensitive poet; it was not always easy to distinguish the work of one author from the work of another; the result was a considerable number of pleasing anthology pieces. Furthermore, most of it was static: it failed to show any very interesting development in the mind and experience of the author. Now Monro, with his amiable, but uncritical capacity for admiring other people's verse, gives me the impression of having tried, in some of his earlier work, but probably unconsciously, to be more like other writers than he really was. His originality, in all but his latest work, is not immediately apparent from any one poem; it was not indeed until re-reading the whole of his published work that I recognised completely how distinctly, in his whole work, the vision is the personal vision of Harold Monro.

Had Monro been a poet who could have worked out his own method in isolation, and ignored the attempts of his contemporaries, he might earlier have found a more personal idiom. It was part of the irony of his situation that, being essentially a different kind of poet, with different things to say, from any of his elder or younger contemporaries, he was yet actively and passionately interested in "poetry," in the confraternity of poets, and in the publication and dissemination of their writings. The other poets about him were occupied with either more obvious or more recondite imaginings. And his difficulties in expression must have been considerable. He is at the same time very intimate and very reticent. He does not express the spirit of an age; he expresses the spirit of one man, but that so faithfully that his poetry will remain as one variety of the infinite number of possible expressions of tortured human consciousness.

Monro is obviously not a "nature poet." The attitude towards nature which we find again and again in his poems is that of the town-dweller, of the man who, as much by the bondage of temperament and habit as by that of external necessity, must pass his life among streets. Some poets, such as Baudelaire, similarly possessed by the town, turn directly to the littered streets, the squinting slums, the grime and smoke and the viscid human life within the streets, and find there the centre of intensity.[5] Monro's poetry, so far as it is concerned with the countryside, is rather that of the perpetual week-ender, oscillating between departure and return; his city is that of the man who would flee to the country, his country that of the man who must tomorrow return to town. Now, this is not only a state of mind important enough to deserve recording in poetry, but it also becomes, in some of Monro's poems, representative of something larger and less easily apprehensible, a *poésie des brefs départs* (as in the sonnet sequence "Week-End").[6]

Here a distinction may conveniently be made. There are various degrees of symbolism in imagery. A poet may have a set of imagery come whole and self-sufficient to his mind,[7†] so that his sole conscious concern is to set down that vision without concerning himself, in the act of composition, with the meaning of it, but only with the delight of the symmetry of the picture. Monro's mind did not work in this way; I feel always that the centre of his interest is never in the visible world at all, but in the spectres and the "bad dreams" which live inside the skull, in the ceaseless question and answer of the tortured mind, or the unspoken question and answer between two human beings. To get inside his world takes some trouble, and it is not a happy or sunny world to stay in, but it is a world which we ought to visit. The external world, as it appears in his poetry, is manifestly but the mirror of a darker world within. It takes the form sometimes of what a superficial glance might dismiss as the whimsical: talking Beds and Teapots.[8] Inanimate objects take on animation of a kind; his old houses are not so much haunted by ghosts as they are ghosts themselves haunting the folk who briefly visit them. Under the influence of this sincere and tormented introspection, the warm reality dissolves: both that for which we hold out our arms, and that at which we strike vain blows.[9†]

It takes time. There is no one poem, no few poems, which I could point to and say: this will give you the essence of Monro; the nearest approach,[10†] and the dourest excruciation, is his last "Bitter Sanctuary."[11] This one poem must at least demonstrate that Monro's vision of life was different from that of any of his contemporaries. But we must read the lot of them in order to understand.

There was no way out. There never is. The compensations for being a poet are grossly exaggerated; and they dwindle as one becomes older, and the shadows lengthen, and the solitude becomes harder to endure.[12] We can only say: "Sleep; and if life was bitter to thee, pardon."[13] Monro's work is so manifestly honest and bitter that we may be sure he would have cared for no praise that was not just and moderate. I have not overpraised. I think that his poetry, as a whole, is more nearly the real right thing than any of the poetry of a somewhat older generation than mine except Mr. Yeats's.[14] That is only the one way of looking at it. In the end, it will remain because, like every other good poet, he has not simply done something better than anyone else, but done something that no one else has done at all.[15†]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. TSE was commissioned to write this introduction by the poet's widow Alida Monro after contributing an anonymous obituary of Harold Monro to the *Times* of 17 Mar 1932 (4.432). TSE took a typescript of Monro's collected poems with him to the United States, drafting his introduction in California in Jan 1933 and rewriting it at Eliot House, Harvard. On 5 Feb TSE sent it to Alida Monro explaining that "I find it extraordinarily difficult to say anything about a contemporary." TSE made minor revisions to the proof and the volume was published in May.

On 13 Dec 1955, TSE wrote to Alida to say that if the volume had gone out of print he proposed to publish a new edition at Faber. She agreed, pending an expected release from Duckworth publishers, which had taken over Cobden-Sanderson's list. TSE completed his revised and expanded critical note in Apr 1956, but in July, Duckworth determined to reissue the volume itself (delayed until 1970), without TSE's note, which remains unpublished. Emendations in the 1956 text are recorded in the notes.

2†. In 1956: "If we consider the poetry of Harold Monro . . . we see him as placed between . . ." In a letter to Ezra Pound of 30 Mar 1932, TSE claimed that Monro's poetry "has a character which clearly distinguishes it both from the Georgian work on the one hand and our own on the other." Monro was the publisher of five anthologies of *Georgian Poetry* between 1912 and 1922.

3†. In 1956: remainder of paragraph revised: "With Georgian poetry he had little in common. The term 'Georgian poetry' itself, coined for the occasion, has with time become less meaningful; and, as with other classification of poets contemporary with each other, it is only the minor members of the group – if group there was – whose work remains in one's mind with that label attached to it. But I think that Harold Monro must be placed half-way between my own generation and that of Walter de la Mare and Ralph Hodgson. And, as may easily happen to a poet whose work stands between two positive and distinct manners, his originality, in all but his latest work, is not immediately apparent in any one poem; it was not indeed until re-reading the whole of his published verse that I realized how distinctly, in his whole work, the vision is the personal vision of Harold Monro."

4. In "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry, I" (1917), TSE characterized Monro as "one of those (for he is to be associated to the Georgian poets) who has the most consistently pursued one direction" (1:576).

5. In his "Talk on Dante" (1950), TSE recalled: "I think that from Baudelaire I learned first, a precedent for the poetical possibilities, never developed by any poet writing in my own language, of the more sordid aspects of the modern metropolis."

6. *poésie des brefs départs*: poetry of brief departures. In "Baudelaire" (1930), TSE observes that "Baudelaire has all the romantic sorrow, but invents a new kind of romantic nostalgia – a derivative of his nostalgia being the *poésie des départs*" (4.162). Monro's sequence of ten sonnets, "Week-End," appeared in the anthology *Georgian Poetry 1916-17*, which TSE reviewed in "Verse Pleasant and Unpleasant" (1.679).

7†. In 1956: "A poet may have an imagery which has come whole and self-sufficient to his mind,"

8. In the opening sonnet of "Week-End," "The smiling teapot with contented spout / Thinks of the boiling water" (125), and in "Every Thing" the poet "often heard / The gentle Bed, a sigh between each word, / Murmuring, before I slept" (120).

9†. In 1956: "Under the influence of this sincere and harassed introspection, the warm reality dissolves: both that towards which we stretch out our arms, and that at which we would buffet."

10†. In 1956: "There is no one poem, no few poems, to which I could point and say: this will give you the essence of Monro. The nearest approach,"

11. TSE published Monro's "Bitter Sanctuary," written following his recovery from a mastoid operation, in the *Criterion* of Oct 1931 (58-59). In his obituary article on Monro, Ezra Pound singled out the poem for praise: "His last and probably his 'best' poem is nearer to preceding poems by Eliot than his own 'Paradise.'" "Harold Monro," *Criterion*, 11 (July 1932), 592.

12. TSE alludes to the Anglican prayer spoken at the end of day: "O LORD, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done." In "Sweeney Erect" (1919), TSE parodies Emerson in the quatrain "(The lengthened shadow of a man / Is history, said Emerson / Who had not seen the silhouette / Of Sweeney straddled in the sun.)" (*CPP* 43).

13. From stanza 17 of Swinburne's elegy for Baudelaire "*Ave atque Vale*" [Hail and Farewell] (1868).

14. Here and in "Dante" (1929), TSE alludes to James's story "The Real Right Thing" (1899) in praising Dante's capacity to represent "the real right thing, the power of establishing relations between beauty of the most diverse sorts; it is the utmost power of the poet" (3.726).

15†. In 1956: "I think that Harold Monro's poetry is the real thing. In the end, it will remain, because, like every other good poet, he has not merely done something better than anyone else, but done something that no one else has done at all"; postscript date flush left below text: 1933/1956

A Commentary[1]

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 12 (July 1933) 642-47

It seems to be the necessity of the moment – at least in America – for the editor of a literary periodical to explain exactly where that periodical stands on the great political and social issues of the day.[2] I have no intention of doing that myself on this occasion; and I have not yet framed any manifesto against manifestoes. In the new *American Review* I recognize doctrines with which I have already expressed sympathy; and it is just as well to be told again that Communism and Capitalism are only forms of the same thing; I said this myself several years ago, and the statement was already so obvious a commonplace that I have forgotten who said it last before me.[3] In *The Symposium* is another manifesto – this one drawn up formally, perhaps too formally; for its thirteen propositions are a sad reminder of the methods of the late President Wilson.[4] It is interesting to observe that *The American Review* and *The Symposium* agree in denouncing Communism and Capitalism; there is one interesting, and rather important point, on which they appear to differ. I say "appear," because only *The Symposium* formulates its view in so many words; but an opposite point of view emerges from contributions to *The American Review*; and the earliest contributions to a review of this character may have something of editorial authority. The words of the editors of *The Symposium* are these: *The moral and spiritual goods should not be the direct concern of a politico-economic party at the present time*. [133]

Here, I think, is a real issue. It appears that the word "direct" used above is a superfluity, to judge from the sentence which follows: "If its program is acceptable at the level of social practice and if it does not *conflict* with these moral and spiritual goods, then that program is just, is all that should be attempted, and all that any individual has a right to ask for" [133]. It would appear, then, that the "party" does not need to be concerned with moral and spiritual goods at all in order to do its job, to save us on the politico-economic plane. Furthermore, I do not find it stated in any part of the manifesto, that it is necessary or desirable for the individuals composing that party to have as individuals any direct concern with the moral and spiritual goods either; possibly, indeed, the children of this world are wiser in their generation than the children of light.[5] And this does seem to me to create a real issue between two types of reformer or revolutionist: the coming type of Liberal Reformer, which the *Symposium* strikes me as prefiguring, and the Reactionary, who at this point feels a stronger sympathy with the communist. What, in fact, is the relation of morals and politics?

It might seem at first that an ally of any sort is welcome in an emergency – and we are always in an emergency – and that the temperate economic or political reformer, the sensible revolutionist, should be on working terms with one kind of ethical reformer or revolutionist, we will say the Christian ethical reformer. But if that is to be accepted, we must be very sure about the terms, and dupe neither others nor ourselves. I remember that I was once scolded (and if my memory serves me it was by the editor of the *American Review*) for sowing discord among the ranks of the well-intentioned, for betraying the cause, by exposing my doubts about Humanism.[6] That was only a few years ago; but where is Humanism now? In the arms of John Dewey and a committee of Unitarian clergy.[7] She is a fallen sister; we cannot now speak of her in front of the children. A united group, we should have learned by now, acts, if we have patience, more surely than a large and miscellaneous group. There were equivocations about Humanism towards which no compromise could be extended; so there may be about some of the economic philosophies which aim at setting things right without moral discipline. Disguised as they are, veiled from common minds like mine, by the categories of their sacred science, any of them may belong in those utopias which take no account of human nature. But I believe that the study of ethics has priority over the study of politics; that this priority is something immutable which no famine or war can change;[8] and that, even when a philosopher is expressly "not directly concerned" with ethics, yet his politics and economics will have some obscure ethical assumption, or the defect of some ethical assumption, by which, if I could find it, I could judge them. Even such demure and sedately walking revolutionists as Sir Arthur Salter and Maynard Keynes must be considered very circumspectly from this point of view.[9]

The great merit of Communism is the same as one merit of the Catholic Church, that there is something in it which minds on every level can grasp. Marx may not be intelligible, but Communism is.[10] Communism has what is now called a "myth." It interferes with people's private lives, and therefore excites men as sensible economists never excite the inhabitants of Poplar and Hoxton.[11] It interferes just as much by giving people licence in ways which they had been brought up not to expect, or else by telling them that the way in which they instinctively behave is the right way, as by restraining them in ways in which they were not accustomed to be restrained. People like licence, and they like restraint. They like surprise. The one thing they do not like is boredom. And Communism is successful so long as it gives people the illusion that they are not bored; so long as it can give them the illusion that they are important. For it has been shown again and again in history that people can put up with the absence of all the things that economists tell us they most need, with every rigour, every torment, so long as they are not bored. Why did the children of Israel murmur against Moses? Because they got tired of walking and seemingly arriving nowhere. *And the whole congregation of the children of Israel murmured against Moses and Aaron in the wilderness; and the children of Israel said unto them, Would to God we had died by the hand of the Lord in the land of Egypt, when we sat by the flesh pots, and when we did eat bread to the full; for ye have brought us forth into this wilderness, to kill this whole assembly with hunger.*[12]

The children of Israel saw the economic problem; the problem was simpler for them, because the quails, when they arrived, were consumed, instead of being buried; but really their trouble was lack of inspiration, in other words boredom.[13]

The British people has been taught that it should manage its own affairs; but wrongly taught. Every man knows that he should manage his own household; every village knows that it should manage itself. Yet everything has been reversed: instead of managing our own affairs we are given a ticket entitling us to some voice in managing other people's affairs. We are led to believe that a Parliamentary election is the most important occasion on which we may exercise our Right; whereas it should matter much more to us – and we are much more competent to decide – who should manage our own village than who should manage Parliament. We are taught, in every modern nation, to worship the nation first, the district second, and the local community third, and the family last; whereas we are only capable of understanding the nation through its relation to the family.[14]

A social system which has no explicit moral foundation, in which the Church, rather than the brothels, is tolerated, in which ownership of land, except for speculative purposes, is not encouraged, may yet have moral consequences and influences upon the individual. A system based on moral presuppositions of which we disapprove may turn the individual into a kind of person whom we dislike, but he will still be a person who feels that he has a reason for existing; the result of a system which has no moral presuppositions may be nothing better than decay. I can quite understand the antipathy of the editors of the *Symposium* to the Communist ideology:

> It is, on the one hand, in its exaggerated internationalism (which is actually Slavophilism), equalitarianism, "revolutionary optimism," in its conception of the possibilities of social development and its vision of future anarchic heaven on earth, ridiculously utopian; and, on the other, in the cluttering ideology with which it loads and impedes its political activities, in its conceptions and analyses of literature, art, morality, religion, and human nature, it is barbaric. [133]

A good many people feel the same way about it; and it is difficult to take seriously people who take themselves humourlessly, as the Russians seem to do. But I am not so sure as the editors of the *Symposium* seem to be, that this "cluttering ideology" has actually "impeded" the political activities of the Communists in Russia. I should have to see that proved; otherwise I am inclined to believe that the "cluttering ideology" holds the whole thing together; and that it is this which has attracted most converts of an intellectual and pseudo-intellectual kind. We certainly do not want an ideology which is going to obstruct efficient and sensible administration. And I cannot think that the Communist ideology, however suited it may be to the contemporary Russian mind, is quite adaptable to a civilization which is predominantly middle-class, as is the whole of western Europe, Britain and America. I am not in a position to know how closely the forms of government now in practice in Italy and Germany are adaptable to the needs of Anglo-Saxon cultures; I do not even know how far they are permanently adapted to the needs of their own; but they appear to issue from a lower middle-class movement rather than from a proletarian movement.[15]

My affirmation of the necessity of a conception of the good life for the individual, as underlying political-economic ideas, is (I imagine) akin to Mr. Douglas Jerrold's notion of the Ethical State.[16] It needs, however, some qualifications which may possibly bring it nearer to the *Symposium*'s thirteenth point, which is made as follows:

> The primary business of criticism is always at the critical level; but at the present time it is necessary for the critical point of view to recognize also the issues at the level of social practice, and to study the relations between the two levels; and to attempt to reconcile the just side

> of the politico-economic issue with values acceptable at the critical level. [133]

I am not quite sure, however, of the meaning of this sentence. It does not necessarily imply that "the moral and spiritual goods" are the concern of criticism; and, if not, I should like to know whose concern they are. Furthermore, I should like to know in what precise ways, in the opinion of the *Symposium*, "the present time" differs from other times, and also what historical parallels there are for our time, if any. And the term "social practice" may comprehend almost as much or as little as we like. My qualification of my own statement is this: that the best form of politico-economic reform or revolution, which is compatible with the facts and with our ethical views, may be accepted, even if the person or persons who have devised it are not themselves animated by those views. We cannot, however, leave it at that. We cannot say that the emergency requires first a readjustment in the politico-economic world, and that when that is effected we may turn our attention to making it a world in which there is positive value. The system which the intelligent economist discovers or invents must immediately be related to a moral system. I hold that it is ultimately the moralists and philosophers who must supply the foundations of statesmanship, even though they never appear in the forum. We are constantly being told that the economic problem cannot wait. It is equally true that the moral and spiritual problems cannot wait: they have already waited far too long.

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. On 27 May, TSE sent a cable to Faber & Faber: "POSTING COMMENTARY TOMORROW PLEASE WAIT IF POSSIBLE"

2. On 24 June, TSE left America and sailed from Montreal to Greenock, Scotland, and on to Liverpool, arriving in London during the first week of July.

3. The *American Review* was launched in New York in May 1933 by publisher Seward Collins as a successor to the *Bookman*. At this time, Collins was moving away from his support for the American New Humanism towards fascism. In the editorial to which TSE refers, Collins attacks both capitalism and communism and offers praise of Mussolini and, to a lesser extent, Hitler ["The Revival of Monarchy," *American Review*, 1 (May 1933), 243-56]. TSE published the first of his recent Page-Barbour lectures, titled "Tradition and Orthodoxy," in the *American Review* for Mar 1934 (513-28). He addresses the relation between communism and capitalism in several of his *Criterion* editorials, contending in Apr 1932 that "Russian Communism seems merely an attempt to catch up with Western Capitalism, and to imitate some of what are to me its most objectionable habits" (4.458).

4. The Editors [James Burnham and Philip Wheelwright], "Comment: Thirteen Propositions," *The Symposium*, 4 (Apr 1933), 127-34. Since 1930, the *Criterion* and the *Symposium* exchanged copies. TSE was initially enthusiastic about US president Woodrow Wilson's "Fourteen Points," which articulated to the US Congress in Jan 1918 the moral basis on which World War I was being fought. TSE later became disillusioned with Wilson, informing his mother on 2 Oct 1919 that "Wilson went down utterly before European diplomacy" at the Versailles Peace Conference (*L1* 404).

5. i.e., Christians: "Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day: we are not of the night, nor of darkness" (1 Thessalonians 5:5).

6. TSE was annoyed by Collins's article "discussing the deeper problems involved in humanism, written from the religious point of view by T. S. Eliot" ("Criticism in America: II The Revival of the Anti-Humanist Myth," *The Bookman* [New York] (July 1930, 400-15; here 400). TSE responded in a letter to the editor, which was not published (4.85).

7. John Dewey sat on the advisory board of the First Humanist Society of New York, founded in 1929 by the Unitarian minister Charles Francis Potter, and was one of the original thirty-four signatories (fifteen of whom were Unitarians) of the first Humanist Manifesto, published in the *New Humanist* for May/June 1933. On 16 June 1932, TSE wrote to Allen Tate to commend his critique of Dewey but rejected it for the *Criterion* on the grounds that Dewey was little known in England.

8. TSE alludes to Jeremiah 27:8: "that nation will I punish, saith the LORD, with the sword, and with the famine, and with the pestilence, until I have consumed them by his hand"

9. Sir Arthur Salter (1881-1975), civil servant, politician and political scientist, author of *Recovery: The Second Effort* (1932). *The World Monetary Crisis and the Way of Escape* (1932) containing essays by Salter and Keynes was reviewed by Geoffrey Biddulph in the *Criterion* for Jan 1933 (318-23). TSE discusses Keynes's "National Self-Sufficiency" lecture, delivered in Dublin in April and published in the *New Statesman* on 8 and 15 July, in his address to the Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology on 24 July.

10. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1932, TSE expressed admiration for Marx, whose "power is so great, and his analysis so profound, that it must be very difficult for anyone who reads him without prejudice on the one hand, or without any definite religious faith on the other, to avoid accepting his conclusions" (4.456). When John Maynard Keynes wrote to say that he found excessive TSE's statement that Marx's work was "impressive," TSE replied on 9 June 1932: "It does not seem to me that it was any extreme praise to call Marx's work impressive. Anything that has impressed so many people is at least impressive as a historical phenomenon. There is, I admit, a great deal that I can't understand, and the whole theory of historical materialism and economic determination in the Marxian sense is just to me an incredible religious dogma."

11. At this time, Hoxton, the birthplace of Marie Lloyd, and Poplar were poor working-class areas of East London. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1931, TSE alludes to the 1921 Poplar Rates Rebellion led by George Lansbury (4.307).

12. Exodus 16:2-3

13. In Exodus 16, God provides the starving Israelites with quails, which Moses commands them to eat and not to save. TSE may have been put in mind of these quails by A. E. Housman's playful reference to them in his May 1933 Leslie Stephen lecture, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, which he was reviewing for the *Criterion* at the time.

14. In his BBC broadcast "The Search for Moral Sanction" (1932), TSE observes: "Just as the centre of human life is the family, so the social unit is the village" (4.451).

15. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1932, TSE casts doubt on the applicability of Soviet Communism to the West: "I quite agree with Mr. Murry about the profound differences between the Russian and the Western European situations" (4.458). In a letter to Herbert Read of 19 Feb 1934, TSE distinguished the royalist politics of Britain from the regimes of Italy and Germany: "the fascist and the royalist ideology are incompatible."

16. In his article "English Political Thought and the Post-War Crisis," *American Review*, 1 (May 1933), 150-78, Jerrold describes the "Ethical State" as the objective of the "authoritarian group on the Right of the Conservative Party" (164), and he concludes: "I prophesy the ultimate cure of our troubles in an Anglo-Saxon version of the Ethical State" (174).

The author and publisher Douglas Jerrold (1893-1964), since 1931 editor of the *English Review*, shared many of TSE's political convictions, including a preference for Toryism over modern Conservatism, a distrust of liberalism and the belief that communism was predicated on capitalism. TSE published Jerrold's article "Authority, Mind and Power" in the *Criterion* of Jan 1933 (223-43).

Catholicism and International Order[1]

I assume that we are all of one mind about the deplorable consequences of the schisms of Christianity, and are convinced of the vital importance of the reunion of Christendom. We are also aware that if Christendom were re-united to-morrow it would be far from coextensive with even the European world. Against it would be not only that considerable body of influence which is positively anti-Christian, but all the forces which we denominate Liberal, embracing all people who believe that the public affairs of this world and those of the next have nothing to do with each other; who believe that in a perfect world those who like golf could play golf, and those who like religion could go to church. We, on the other hand, feel convinced, however darkly, that our spiritual faith should give us some guidance in temporal matters; that if it does not, the fault is our own; that morality rests upon religious sanction, and that the social organization of the world rests upon moral sanction; that we can only judge of temporal values in the light of eternal values; we are committed to what in the eyes of the world must be a desperate belief, that a Christian world-order, *the* Christian world-order, is ultimately the only one which, from any point of view, will work.

So far, in fact, as we individually concern ourselves with present social, political, economic problems, we as Catholics are committed to a much more searching analysis both of the problems and of every solution put forward, than the ordinary member of the public, or even the ordinary specialist, feels called upon to make. It is not merely that we exact of any system, before we give it our adherence, that it shall perform functions to which the ordinary system maker is indifferent: that, for instance, it shall recognize the place of ecclesiastical authority. The relation between the natural and the supernatural is not to be settled by a Concordat. What I have in mind is that only the Christian thinker is compelled to examine all his premisses, and try to start from the fundamental terms and propositions. I am unqualified[2†] to discuss either political science or economics; and the latter science is to me distinctly more incomprehensible than mathematics. Nevertheless, I cannot help believing that the majority of actual practitioners of both political and economic science, in their very effort to be scientific, to limit precisely, that is, the field of their activity, make assumptions which they are not only entitled to make, but which they are not always conscious of making. All one's views and theories, of course, have some ultimate relation to the kind of man one is. But only the Catholic, in practice, is under the manifest obligation to find out what sort of man he is – because he is under the obligation to improve that man according to definite ideals and standards. The non-Catholic, certainly the non-Christian philosopher, feeling no obligation to alter himself, and therefore no cogent need to understand himself, is apt to be under the sway of his prejudices, his social background, his individual tastes. So, I dare say, are we: but we at least, I hope, admit our duty to try to subdue them. This assertion may appear extremely presumptuous. But I speak not so much from my knowledge of economics, which is less than sketchy, but from my occasional acquaintance with economists.

I feel, then, no confidence in any proposal for putting the world in order until the proposer has answered satisfactorily the question: what is the good life? Very often, I fear, he can give no better answer than pointing to the kind of life that he, as a natural man and a separated individual, happens to like. Very few people, indeed, want to be better than they are; or, to put it in more consecrated terms, hunger and thirst after righteousness. And what we happen to like as individuals outside of the main current, which is the Catholic tradition, is apt to be what our own sort of people, within a narrow limit of place and time, have been happening to like. We are likely to assume as eternal truths things that in fact have only been taken for granted by a small body of people or for a very short period of time. Instead of bringing to bear the whole history of our civilization upon our particular emergencies we may be merely applying recent or local ways of thinking. A really satisfactory working philosophy of social action, as distinct from devices from getting ourselves out of a hole at the moment, requires not merely science but wisdom. It is perhaps too much to expect of any man to possess both specialized scientific power and wisdom: we cannot expect economists to help us until we know what we want of them. Ultimately our views, our selection among the solutions offered us, will differ – setting aside the part played by prejudice and self-interest – according to our views of human nature. This is not a matter of science but of wisdom; and wisdom is only gained in two ways, and well gained only through both: a study of human nature through history, the actions of men in the past and the best that they have thought and written, and a study through observation and experience of the men and women about us as we live.

I believe that the Catholic Church, with its inheritance from Greece and from Israel, is still, as it always has been, the great repository of wisdom. Wisdom seems to be a commodity less and less available in educational institutions; for the methods and ideals coming into vogue in modern education, scientific specialization on the one hand, and a treatment of the humanities either as a kind of pseudo-science or as superficial culture, are not calculated to cultivate a disposition towards wisdom: something which, certainly, educational institutions cannot teach, because it cannot be learnt in the time or wholly in such surroundings, but which they can teach us to desire, which they can teach us how to go about acquiring. The modern world separates the intellect and the emotions. What can be reduced to a science, in its narrow conception of "science," whatever can be handled by sharpness of wit mastering a limited and technical material, it respects; the rest may be a waste of uncontrolled behaviour and immature emotion. I wish that the classical conception of wisdom might be restored, so that we might not be left wholly to the political scientist on the one hand, or the demagogue on the other. For the ordinary politician, wisdom is identified with expediency, for the political scientist it disappears in theory; but wisdom, including political wisdom, can neither be abstracted to a science, nor reduced to a dodge; nor can you supply it by forming a committee composed of scientists and dodgers in equal numbers. And human wisdom, I add finally, cannot be separated from divine wisdom without tending to become merely worldly wisdom, as vain as folly itself.

My purpose so far has been simply to put forward that we, as Catholics, cannot simply accept or reject the solutions offered by specialized theorists in the world, according to whether they appear on the surface to admit of a place for us and our faith. We have to criticize the moral assumptions explicit or implicit, and recognize what are, from our point of view, the limitations and errors of their authors. And we ourselves, I suspect, are liable to fall into boobytraps of our own setting. We are in danger always of translating notions too literally from one order to another. I discern two chief pitfalls. The ideas of authority, of hierarchy, of discipline and order, applied inappropriately in the temporal sphere, may lead us into some error of absolutism or impossible theocracy. Or the ideas of humanity, brotherhood, equality before God, may lead us to affirm that the Christian can only be a socialist. Heresy is always possible; and where there is one possible heresy, there are always at least two; and when two doctrines contradict each other, we do not always remember that both may be wrong. And heresy may extend, of course, into affairs of this world which people do not ordinarily judge according to such standards: we might expect to find it, for instance, in some forms of Fascism as well as in some forms of Socialism. It is inevitable in any organization of men which does not recognize the Christian foundations of society. And we need not be surprised to find two antithetical heresies existing in conjunction. The conception of individual liberty, for instance, must be based upon the unique importance of every single soul, the knowledge that every man is ultimately responsible for his own salvation or damnation, and the consequent obligation of society to allow every individual the opportunity to develop his full humanity. But unless this humanity is considered always in relation to God, we may expect to find an excessive love of created beings, in other words humanitarianism, leading to a genuine oppression of human beings in what is conceived by other human beings to be their interest. I consider that only Christian and Catholic thought, operating in the sphere of sociology, can save us from these extremes which only create worse confusion when they meet. The heresy is often more plausible, more apparently rational, and also more expedient at the moment, than the true faith. For wisdom is not arrived at by a strictly logical conclusion from agreed premisses; you have often no means of compelling by reason those to accept who do not want to accept. It is obvious that the second half of the Summary of the Law is a delusion and a cheat if you erase the first half; but how will you prove that to the enthusiast and the system-builder?[3] It is something which we know to be true, by what may indeed be called worldly wisdom: for true worldly wisdom leads up to, and is fulfilled in, and is incomplete without, *other*-worldly wisdom.

I am not for a moment suggesting that theories of what should be done to save the world, either general or particularized, are inevitably wrong or useless when they have not been built on Christian and Catholic foundations. But let us take, for example, an institution about which most of us know a little and a very few, of whom I am not one, know a great deal. I am not denying the utility of the League of Nations either in the years of its existence or in the future when I suggest that it should have been obvious at the start that the League could never fulfil the aspirations of its founders.[4†] The whole conception seems to me to date from the period of Rousseau, and to illustrate that exaggerated faith in human reason to which people of undisciplined emotions are prone. The assumption was that you could take European society, in the disorganized and hysterical state in which it was in 1918, accepting rather than deprecating the nationalism which was already developed and which was bound to develop further, impose upon it a fictitious federal union of a kind which had not proved its durability in the land of its origin, provide a central machinery with a democratic organization in which not only powerful nations and weak, but important and unimportant nations, more and less civilized nations, were to meet in nominal approximation to equality, and expect reasonableness and enlightened self-interest to settle all difficulties. I may be wrong, but I should be surprised if I was altogether wrong. And what then is the League of Nations to-day? It is a machine; I dare say, like most machines the component parts of which are human beings associated in committee, that it has too many parts; but still an efficient machine for the tasks for which men see fit to employ it. It has settled minor disputes between minor members in such a way as to preserve what was most vital: peace and the self-respect of both parties. In matters upon which the majority of civilized nations is still civilized enough to maintain, and to be obliged to profess, common principles, and in which the interest of no nation is to the damage of another, but the interest of all are identical as against lawless elements within each – such as Drug Traffic and Slavery, black or white – in matters like these, I believe, the League of Nations may well justify, and probably has already justified its foundation and its expense. But in matters in which powerful interests and passions are at work, it must rely, like all democratic government, upon a balance of interests, rather than upon common interest, upon prudential ethics, not religious ethics. It is Modernism in the political field. I am not attacking the League, but seeking for a definition of its limitations: it can function all the better, if we recognize what these limitations are. But it would be better still if its inventors had themselves seen these limitations: for what sentimentalism initiates, cynicism and intrigue can exploit.[5†]

The Catholic should have high ideals – or rather I should say *absolute* ideals – and moderate expectations: the heretic, whether he call himself fascist or communist or democrat or rationalist, always has low ideals and great expectations. For I say that all utopianism, all ambitions of an earthly paradise, are informed by low ideals. I am not condemning all schemes for the betterment of mankind which are not the product of Catholic thinking; but only affirming that all such schemes, as well as our own when we are occupied with immediate temporal emergencies, must be submitted to such examination as only Catholic wisdom can supply. Confronted with any definitely anti-Christian system of society, we are sure that such a system, because founded on falsehood, cannot ever work properly. And by "proper working" we imply also in the long run happiness on the lowest normal human level. Compared with any degree of Christian society that has ever been actual, there have been, or are said to have been, primitive societies in which were found a far higher average of pleasure and a far lower average of pain: advocates of sex reform are always referring us to the manners of the happy Trobriand Islanders.[6] In comparison with any primitive society we can only say that the quality of pleasure and happiness prevailing in such society is too low to attract any civilized person: even the lowest of civilized individuals cannot adapt himself to such society without deteriorating and incidentally, in many cases, corrupting the natives with him. But it is not with the choice between civilized and primitive society that we actually have to deal; it is with the choice between Christian, non-Christian and anti-Christian orders. With the second of these we are all familiar, and we know how it works. And the third, we are sure, will not work either.

What we have to aim at is not merely an order which will not contradict the Christian order, an order in which Christians and non-Christians can accommodate themselves in perfect harmony: any programme that a Catholic can envisage must aim at the conversion of the whole world. The only positive unification of the world, we believe, is religious unification; by which we do not mean simply universal submission to one world-wide ecclesiastical hierarchy, but cultural unity in religion – which is not the same thing as cultural uniformity. And any general scheme of international harmony put forward as a substitute for religious unity is likely to be more of a menace than a hope. It will distract men's minds from the real issues, it will soothe them with an illusory sense of virtue and security; and like every structure built only by human reason, will eventually fall beneath the impact of human passions, leaving only a bitter and unnecessary disillusionment. It is only the Catholic who cannot be disillusioned.

Our duty, it seems to me, with regard to all purely secular attempts to set the world right, is to welcome them for what they are worth, when they have any good in them, and at the same time proclaim their limitations and the danger of expecting more of them than such human inventions can perform. We have been undeceived about developments which at one time or another were expected to bring unity to the world. At one time, progress and enlightenment were expected to do it; and the spread of democracy and Parliamentary institutions. I am afraid that this meant, so far as Britain and America were concerned, a belief that the one thing necessary was for the rest of the world to model itself or be modelled by force upon Britain or America respectively. The fact is that it is very difficult for any of us to know in what ways we are superior to other peoples, and in what ways merely different. At a later time, what was called the conquest of space was expected, by increasing facilities of communication between peoples, to favour understanding. The conquest of space has made it possible for peoples to fight from greater distances, but in other ways has not done all that it should: in America, thanks to the conquest of space, you can get fresh vegetables and fruit at any time of the year, and none of it has any flavour. Standardization was expected to unify peoples, though perhaps at the price of monotony; standardization has tended to make peoples alike where they had better be different, and you can hear the same kind of music from any wireless station in Europe; but to exist in amity peoples need something more in common than a dance-step, or a universal mastery of Ford cars. More recently, we have often heard that the economic and financial interdependence of nations makes harmony and common action, if not inevitable, at least imperative: we must agree, or we shall perish. You can put a variety of savage beasts together in one cage, and tell them that they must tolerate each other and share their food equably or they will perish: but it would be simpler and more humane to confine them in different cages according to their kind. Such interdependence of peoples of widely different emotional organization begins to appear now to be merely multiplying occasions of discord; and to hope for anything from it is the illusory reward of those who continue to perform oblations to that deceitful goddess of Reason who was only born some hundred and fifty years ago.

It is interesting to observe that some of the more astute of the children of this economic world are beginning to suspect that internationalism can be the enemy of international amity. Sardonic critics have even suggested that travel bureaux ought to be suppressed, except perhaps for the purpose of facilitating religious pilgrimages; for the more peoples see of each other, these philosophers maintain, the more opportunity they have for misunderstanding and disliking each other: everyone remembers the occasion on which he was swindled, treated rudely, or given a bad meal and an uncomfortable bed whilst on his travels. But a more moderate critic, for whom I have considerable respect, Mr. Maynard Keynes, has recently put forward some suggestions in this direction in two interesting articles in *The New Statesman*.[7] Mr. Keynes deprecates the system under which every small investor is partially dependent on income from industries, often at the ends of the earth, of which he has no knowledge and over which he has no control; he would like to see management and ownership brought closer together.[8] It has long seemed to me that many international enterprises, as well as international politics, had swollen to such magnitude that they were beyond the power of the human mind to control efficiently, safely, and with due respect to the interests of everyone concerned. We have several notable cases in recent years in which the character of the man in power, rather than his mind, has broken down under the strain: to the hardship or ruin of almost innumerable victims. And this desire for a simplification of international relations, to which Mr. Keynes has given voice, seems to me to have some connexion with the yearning towards regionalism which we have observed springing up spontaneously in various parts of the world; in America, in Scotland, and even I have been told in North Germany. With such movements, after we have deducted the political nonsense and the sentimental-retrospective-literary nonsense, I am instinctively in sympathy; as I also am, again entirely on instinct, for I have no gift whatever for abstruse thinking, with some kind of credit-reform and with distributism. I have little hope for the future of America until that country falls apart into its natural components, divisions which would not be simply those of the old North and South and still less those of the forty-eight states.

I imagine that my general sympathies and tendencies, in the matter of social and economic reform, are similar to those which individual members of this School have expressed. But of one thing I feel more and more sure, and that is that the Catholic cannot commit himself utterly and absolutely to any one form of temporal order. I do not mean by this that he must remain aloof, or refuse to champion any cause or adopt any course to which reason, sensibility and wisdom converge to point; but that his attitude must be always relative, that he must never devote the same passion to any Kingdom of this world that he should render to the Kingdom of God. There are many possible occasions on which he may suitably give up his life for temporal causes, but never his sense of values; remembering the Platonic hint that nothing in this world is wholly serious – that "nothing" including of course the prolongation of one's own existence in the world.[9] I do not mean either that I wish to draw, or would allow to be drawn, a line between spiritual and temporal affairs. It is not, I trust, merely because we happen to be Catholics *and* public-spirited individuals, that we are interested in public and international affairs, but because our Faith is of a kind that compels us to the latter interest. Accordingly, if we are to contribute our share, not merely as citizens, but as Catholic citizens, we must not be content to peruse blue books, newspapers, and political and economic treatises; we must first of all become thoroughly conversant with our own theology.

I make this reservation, and draw this distinction, because I feel that the outside world will always be ready to grasp at any excuse to pretend that Catholics, and especially Anglo-Catholics, are committed to some social programme which becomes practically identified with their Faith. Perhaps these misunderstandings cancel out: we are qualified as bigoted reactionaries, or as reckless socialists, according to the disposition of the hostile critic and the tendencies of some individual Catholic whom he has in mind. I think that the virtue of tolerance is greatly overestimated, and I have no objection to being called a bigot myself; but that is an individual concern. But I am the more careful in the matter because some years ago I made wisely or unwisely, a brief announcement of faith religious, political and literary which became too easily quotable.[10] It may have given some critics the impression that for me all these three were inextricable and *of equal importance*.

In any public causes to which we may devote ourselves, we are always likely to find ourselves allied with non-Catholics of good will; and we have sometimes to remind ourselves of the very different presuppositions which can underlie a common action. I have already suggested that the world is liable to set its ideals too low and its expectations too high; that it is apt to put a blind faith in mechanism; that it is apt to hope that an intelligent recognition of material interests and possibilities, arrived at by conferences and reports, will set things right. It expects too much from vague benevolence, and refuses to face the fact that no great change can ever come without a moral conversion. It lives in the constant expectation of some material miracle, and follows a will o' the wisp which to some eyes takes the shape of Prosperity, and to others that of Revolution.

This moral laziness and evasion is something that we must combat. Here again, however, I do not wish to contrast the Church with the world as if they were everywhere in conflict, or as if the actual Church were an entity with its own policy in every contingency, or as if the world was always wrong and the Church always right. The more minute the particular, the more possibility of legitimate divergency of opinion amongst Churchmen; and in any case I have wished to draw attention to the obligation on the part of church people who interest themselves in public affairs, to make as sure as they can of their foundations and motives, and to distinguish in any programme of action that they may devise, between eternal premisses and the conclusions which they draw and the devices which they invent. The majority of devout Protestants who interest themselves in public well-doing apply their faith to their works without examination,[11] and their specific Christianity is visible chiefly in their disinterestedness, self-sacrifice and emotional fervour. The Catholic with a more definite theology, and I hope a greater practice in self-examination, will make more realistic observation of what he is doing and why; a Catholic, training is, I believe, more calculated to ensure a proper balance between head and heart. I believe also that Catholics should, in any questions of foreign relations, be able to feel a sympathy with foreign points of view which is much better worth having and more effective than diffuse good-will. I believe that there is a Catholic habit of thought and of feeling, which is a bond between Catholics of the most diverse races, nations, classes and cultures; I have sometimes been sadly aware of it, on the other hand with English and American friends of indeterminate religious allegiance, by being brought up suddenly in conversation with the realization that our presuppositions, what we took for granted in discussing some particular problem, were utterly different. Let us hope that these differences between our own people and ourselves will eventually disappear, and meanwhile and always take advantage of such understanding as is possible elsewhere.

It is possible that the period in which we live – if we could see it from a distant enough perspective – may be one of progressive decline of civilization. That is a form of speculation in which I am not interested. There is a certain saving egotism – if we choose to call it egotism – which prevents us from despair so long as we believe that there is anything that we can do which may possibly help to improve matters. It is part of the function of a school like this to clarify our minds about the possible points of immediate action, as well as on first principles. I hope that I have not failed to affirm that there may always be schemes, initiated by non-Christian and non-Catholic minds with purely temporal motives and aims, to which we can give unqualified support; and by supporting them give them a firmer justification and inform them with Christian truth. There are, surely, ways of reorganizing the mechanisms of this world, which in bringing about a greater degree of justice and peace on that plane will also facilitate the development of the Christian life and the salvation of souls. We recognize that possibility in every work of slum-clearance and housing reform.[12] And whereas no man may excuse his own shortcomings by the difficulties he finds in living a Christian life in the actual world, but must rather consider every difficulty as an opportunity, we must do all that we can to reduce the difficulties for other people. One of these difficulties, of which I have not spoken, but which you will no doubt discuss during the next few days, is War, I think that no one can doubt that war in the form in which we have known it in our time, while it gives a few affirmed Christians the opportunity to realize their virtue in action – whether in submission or in protest – and while it often brings out amazing natural virtues, is on the whole degrading. Yet I have no more sympathy with the purely humanitarian attitude toward war than with the humanitarian attitude toward anything else: I should not enjoy the prospect of abolishing suffering without at the same time perfecting human nature. In face of any naturally horrifying phenomenon like war we must measure the suffering, direct and indirect, against the spiritual goods which may come of suffering. We may find that the proportion of futile suffering, and of that kind of suffering which makes men worse rather than better, which abates their human dignity and deadens their sense of responsibility, is far too high; and that the total effect is at best one of futility. What we have to concern ourselves with primarily is the causes in modern society, in our industrial and financial machinery it may be, which bring about the *kind* of war which we have experienced; and to give our adherence to all alterations in that machinery which tend to remove the motives. We do not, I suppose, deny that society is very deeply affected morally and spiritually by material conditions, even by a machinery which it has constructed piecemeal and with short-sighted aims. This is not to accept any doctrine of determinism, for it means no more than that society, and the majority of individuals composing it, are only imperfectly conscious of what they are doing, directed by impure motives and aiming at false goods.

In the long run, I believe that the Catholic Faith is also the only practical one. That does not mean that we are provided with an infallible calculating machine for knowing what should be done in any contingency; it means perpetual new thinking to meet perpetually changing situations. The attitude of the Catholic towards any form of organization, national or international, must always be a specific attitude toward a specific situation. There is a fallacy in democracy, for instance, in assuming that a majority of natural and unregenerate men is likely to want the right things; there may also be a fallacy in dictatorship in so far as it represents a willingness of a majority to surrender responsibility. In nations so self-contained as to be able to ignore each other, culture and perhaps even blood would become too inbred; but if the races of the world mixed until racial strains and local cultures disappeared, the result would be still more disastrous. There must always be a middle way, though sometimes a devious way when natural obstacles have to be circumvented; and this middle way will, I think, be found to be the way of orthodoxy: a way of mediation, but never, in those matters which permanently matter, a way of compromise.

NOTES

1. As printed in *EAM*; originally published in *Christendom: A Journal of Christian Sociology*, 3 (Sept 1933) [171]-184, with the subtitle "Opening Address to the Anglo-Catholic Summer School of Sociology." The School, founded in 1925 at Keble College, Oxford, gave rise in 1931 to the Christendom Group, which aimed to create a Christian sociology distinct from Liberal or Marxist sociology. The Group, which included Maurice B. Reckitt, V. A. Demant, Ruth Kenyon, and P. E. T. Widdrington, immediately founded *Christendom*, which was edited by Reckitt until its demise in 1952. The theme of the Ninth Anglo-Catholic Summer School at Keble College (24-28 July) was "Catholicism and International Order"; TSE's opening address on 24 July was the first of four under that general title. The first paragraph of the address was deleted in *EAM*:

> "This is by no means the first occasion on which I have had to speak in public on a subject outside of my competence. I appear first as a speaker at a session during which you will hold discussions with men who, to say nothing of their greater abilities than mine, have acquired the special knowledge, and devoted the special thinking, which qualifies them for the task; and I ought to be here only as an inconspicuous auditor. There are, of course, public men for whose opinions on *any* subject there is always a large and interested audience. I have no desire to join this popular profession; I suspect that their public is often animated rather by vulgar curiosity, or the anticipation of a lark, than by a serious craving for self-improvement; and the speaker, in such circumstances, is liable to descend to the role of a mere Entertainer. I must, therefore, try to present and keep fixed in your minds the concept of the common man: in other words, introduce myself as the highly intelligent ignoramus who hopes to be able to express his confusion with clarity, and ask the right questions which will be answered by others more competent."

2†. In *Christendom*: "I am, as I have already admitted, unqualified"

3. "Summary of the Law" is a phrase used in Christian theology to refer to Paul's argument that the Mosaic law has been superseded by a law of love, which requires one to love God with all of one's heart and one's neighbor as oneself. "For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this: Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Galatians 5:14; Romans 13:9). TSE also alludes

to Bradley's statement in *Principles of Logic* that the sensuous world is "a deception and a cheat" if it has nothing more behind it than a "colourless movement of atoms" or an "unearthly ballet of bloodless categories" (1.540).

4†. In *Christendom*: "its founder – a Professor, not irrelevantly, of the science of government, and I believe a member of one of the dissenting sects in America. His whole conception"; TSE refers to Woodrow Wilson, Presbyterian, former president of the United States (1913-21), and leading architect of the League of Nations (founded 1920). Before becoming president, Wilson was a professor of political science and president of Princeton University.

5†. In *Christendom*: "if its inventor had himself seen these limitations, for what sentimentalism initiates, cynicism and intrigue can exploit. The great weakness of Woodrow Wilson was a theological weakness."

6. The Polish anthropologist Bronisław Malinowski visited the Trobriand Islands of Papua New Guinea during World War I and published his ethnographic study of the sexual freedoms, practices, and mores of the islanders from childhood and puberty to adulthood in *The Sexual Life of Savages in North-Western Melanesia* (1929).

7. Keynes's "National Self-Sufficiency" appeared in two installments of *The New Statesman and Nation*, 6 (8 and 15 July 1933), 36-37, 65-67.

8. "The divorce between ownership and the real responsibility of management," writes Keynes, "is serious within a country when, as a result of joint stock enterprise, ownership is broken up between innumerable individuals who buy their interest to-day and sell it to-morrow and lack altogether both knowledge and responsibility towards what they momentarily own. But when the same principle is applied internationally, it is, in times of stress, intolerable – I am irresponsible towards what I own and those who operate what I own are irresponsible towards me" (37).

9. In Plato's *Theaetetus* (359 BC), his dialogues on the nature of knowledge, Theaetetus and Socrates discuss Protagoras's proposal that knowledge of what is real or true is "nothing but perception" and therefore relative to the individual (151d-186e).

10. In the preface to *For Lancelot Andrewes* (1928), TSE wrote of the essays collected therein: "The general point of view may be described as classicist in literature, royalist in politics, and anglo-catholic in religion" (3.513).

11. TSE alludes to the doctrine of justification by faith alone (without works), one of the core principles of Protestantism, articulated by Luther as "*sola fide*."

12. The Housing Act of 1930 advocated the urgent demolition of half a million slum houses. From 1932 to 1935, a building boom accounted for 30% of the increase in employment.

A review of *Letters of Mrs. Gaskell and Charles Eliot Norton, 1855-1865.*

Ed. with an introduction by Jane Whitehill

London: Oxford UP. 1932. Pp. xxxii + 131.

New England Quarterly, 6 (Sept 1933) 627-28

This is not a book for admirers of Norton so much as for admirers of Mrs. Gaskell.[1] In 1857 Mrs. Gaskell took a holiday from Manchester, and paid a visit to the Storys in Rome.[2] Her daughters, Marianne and Meta, accompanied her; in a letter some years later Meta recalls the first meeting to Norton:

> I can see your face and smile now (as distinctly as if I were only just turning away from them) when you caught at some confetti that Mama was dangling on a long stick from the balcony – and Mama said 'Oh look what a charming face!' and Mr. Story (I think it was) said 'Oh, that's Charles Norton,' and then there was a chorus of welcome and bidding you come up. [xix]

And later in life Mrs. Gaskell wrote to the Storys:

> It was in those charming Roman days that my life at any rate, culminated. I shall never be so happy again. I don't think I was ever so happy before. [xxvii]

Neither Norton nor Mrs. Gaskell, seventeen years his senior, was a European. The lady, as her admirers know, came from a parsonage in Manchester. Mr. Gaskell was an earnest, conscientious, somewhat humorless Unitarian pastor, writing sermons, lectures, and hymns; he never absented himself voluntarily from Manchester; he took an annual holiday at Morecambe Bay, but even that was in the same county. Mrs. Gaskell, who bore him a number of children and who devoted herself, and in the end sacrificed herself, to her husband, was entitled to take a holiday with her daughters. She could not have made a more desirable acquaintance than Charles Norton. He was a young man of the highest principles, he was engaged in learning all he could in Italy, and was ready to impart his knowledge; furthermore, he was a Unitarian. In those days sectarian differences were social differences; and Mrs. Gaskell was acutely aware of living, in Manchester, in a social *enclave*. In her letters there is the solemn young Mr. Bosanquet, who, but for his family's religious opinions, might possibly have proved eligible for one of her daughters; and she complains that "here (in Manchester) the Unitarian young men are either good *and* uncultivated, or else rich *and* regardless of those higher qualities the 'spiritual' qualities as it were, which those *must* appreciate who would think of my girls" [44]. She thinks of Norton as a brother, an elder brother, to her girls. But Norton was a Unitarian of a type unfamiliar to Mrs. Gaskell. He was rich, good, *and* cultivated; he had the best introductions everywhere and knew how to use them; and he had a French courier named François. There is nothing to suggest that Mrs. Gaskell had ever before met a Unitarian with a French courier named François. She had a sense of humor, timid and fluttering as it was; she had an unsatisfied love of beauty, gaiety, and civilization; she profited by her visit to Italy and by Norton's explanations of the art of Titian; her later correspondence with Norton must have been a relief from the labors of slaving to provide for the old age of Mr. Gaskell.[3]

This book, as I have said, is not an essential contribution to the biography of Norton. He seems, at thirty, rather a callow, if very estimable young man. The interesting Norton is in the later years, rising to a solitary grandeur at the time of the Spanish War.[4] This is a book about Mrs. Gaskell. She was not George Sand;[5] but the best of her writing is perhaps more permanently readable, for she is among those English (and American) writers who have known how to make a literary virtue out of provinciality – and, in her case, simple goodness.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. The novelist and short story writer Elizabeth Gaskell (1810-65) was already known for her *Mary Barton* (1848), *Cranford* (1853), and *North and South* (1854) when she met a much younger Charles Eliot Norton in Rome. Born of Unitarian ministers and raised in Unitarian households, they enjoyed a close friendship and correspondence until her sudden death.

TSE refers to her *Cranford* in a 1918 review of Susan Miles's *Dunch* (1. 716).

2. William Wetmore Story (1819-95), Harvard graduate and lawyer, abandoned the law and moved to Rome in 1850 to become a sculptor, art critic, poet, and editor. He and his wife Emelyn Eldredge Story (1820-94) hosted many writers from England, and he captured the personal knowledge and experience of Rome that he shared with them in his two-volume *Roba di Roma* (1862). Henry James, who met Wetmore in Rome in the 1870s, wrote a biography,

William Wetmore Story and his Friends (1903), focusing on his literary relationships with the Brownings, Landor, Mrs. Gaskell, James Russell Lowell, and others.

3. William Gaskell (1805-84) was only five years older than Elizabeth, who sacrificed much of her time and energy to his career and causes, and predeceased him by nineteen years.

4. Norton was castigated in the press for leading a large contingent of Harvard professors against what he deemed America's needless and criminal entry into the Spanish-American War of 1898: "If a war be undertaken for the most righteous end," he said, "before the resources of peace have been tried and found vain to secure, that war has no defense; it is a national crime" *(Address before the Men's Club of the Prospect Street Congregational Church, Cambridge, Massachusetts, June 7, 1898)*.

5. The French novelist, playwright, and memoirist George Sand (1804-96) wrote out of a more adventurous, flamboyant, and scandalous lifestyle, involved in notorious relationships with the writers, artists, and musicians of her day, including Musset, Liszt, and Chopin, among others.

A Commentary

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 13 (Oct 1933) 115-20[1]

In the month of July, Irving Babbitt died at his home in Cambridge, Massachusetts, at the end of an illness of some nine months.[2] After a life of indefatigable, and for many years almost solitary intellectual struggle, he had secured for his views, if not full appreciation, at least wide recognition; he had established a great and beneficent influence, of a kind which has less show than substance, through the many pupils who left him to become teachers throughout America; and he had established a strong counter-current in education.

Those who only know Babbitt through his writings, and have had no contact with him as a teacher and friend, will probably not be able to appreciate the greatness of his work. For he was primarily and always a teacher and a talker. He combined rare charm with great force: so that those who knew him will always remember his foibles with affection, and cherish the memory of his brusqueness when other men's suavity is forgotten. Twenty-four years ago, when I first knew him, his reputation was only amongst a few. He was the author of two books, the first of which I still regard as the more important, *Literature and the American College*, and *The New Laokoon*.[3] He was considered an interesting, eccentric and rebellious figure amongst the teaching profession; and his outspoken contempt for methods of teaching in vogue had given him a reputation for unpopularity which attracted to him some discerning graduates and undergraduates at Harvard University. Fortunately for his pupils, his classes in those days were small, and could be conducted informally round a small table. For Babbitt, I think, like some other great teachers, was at his best with a small group of pupils. Superficially, his lectures were almost without method. He would enter the room with a pile of books, papers and notes, which he shifted and shuffled throughout the hour; beginning to talk before he sat down, beginning anywhere and ending anywhere, he gave us the impression that a lifetime was too short for telling us all that he wanted to say. The lectures which I attended were, I believe, concerned with French Literary Criticism; but they had a great deal to do with Aristotle, Longinus and Dionysius of Halicarnassus; they touched frequently upon Buddhism, Confucius, Rousseau, and contemporary political and religious movements.[4] Somehow or other one read a number of books, Aristotle's *Politics* or La Fontaine's *Fables*, just because Babbitt assumed that any educated man had already read them.[5] What held the lectures or talks together was his intellectual passion, one might say intellectual fury; what made them cohere was the constant recurrence of his dominant ideas; what gave them delight was their informality, the demand which they made upon one's mental agility, and the frankness with which he discussed the things that he disliked, and which his pupils came to dislike too.[6]

I think that the point at which Babbitt's ideas converged with the greatest force was the subject of Education. In England, where a traditional fabric of education still stands, though there are not wanting signs of the death-beetle in its timbers, it is difficult to bring home the urgency of the subject. In America, where education has for two or three generations responded to the whim of any modern theory, where a single man of character and conviction can impose his views, from time to time, upon the methods of the whole nation, and where the divergent tastes and ideals of scholars variously trained in Germany, France or England, have been a source of weakness and instability, every vagary has had its opportunity, and successive scholastic generations have only suffered from successive experiments. All this may appear irrelevant to the European, specifically to the English situation; but I believe that it has a bearing. Changes there must always be, reforms there will always be need for, because any system of education is imperfect and requires constant adaptation. But bad changes are as easily made as good; and the fact that a method has failed in one country is no guarantee that it will not be tried in another; and on the other hand the success of a system in one country does not warrant its suitability to another: I should like to know, for instance, whether English models are appropriate for Scotland. The errors against which Babbitt fought are errors from which we are not immune. We insist upon "educating" too many people; and Heaven knows what for. Thirty years ago Babbitt was a young tutor of insecure position, when he began almost single-handed (though perhaps under the approving eye of Charles Norton) to attack the system which Charles Eliot of Harvard had built up and popularized throughout the country; to the end of his life he opposed the heresies of the school of John Dewey.[7] These facts deserve to be recorded in his honour; as particular facts they are of no doubt of only local interest; but they represent moments in a consistent campaign which will have been, I think, to the benefit not only of his own country but of others. Not that American education has yet turned about. When I was a boy we began Latin at twelve or thirteen, and Greek a year later, and that seems to me late enough; now they begin Latin at fourteen or fifteen; in most schools Greek cannot, I understand, be learnt at all, and in the more expensive schools – those which correspond to the Public Schools – Greek is an optional subject, like the piano or violin, taken up by only a very few. When I asked, at a Prize Day, why no Greek prize was offered, I was told that not enough boys studied Greek to make a prize feasible.[8] The most one can say is that Babbitt has won recognition for a different view of education than that prevailing, and has trained a devoted number of pupils who will propagate his views where they can.

In some domains, as in that of the arts, Babbitt was not in so strong a position; and here his work should be taken up and his conclusions reformed by men better qualified than he. With his evangelizing spirit, and his ethical passion, I think that he rather starved his capacity for pure enjoyment; he often, I fear, gave his pupils the impression that he enjoyed nothing but the Iliad, Sophocles, and Gray's *Elegy*; and even those, perhaps, he only allowed himself to enjoy on principle. Men who might otherwise have followed him, may have lost heart at the suspicion that if a masterpiece should be produced in our time, Babbitt (with his faculty of heresy-hunting) would probably denounce it. At any rate, he was not one of those who are ready to acclaim everything new lest their pupils should think them old fogeys. He may be accused, certainly, of reading new books voraciously in order to find out what was wrong with their philosophy; this does not alter the fact, however, that their philosophy usually *is* wrong. Babbitt certainly approached modern art of every kind without any predisposition in its favour; but I think that his natural sensibility was greater than his moral interests allowed it to appear. But it is not art with which he was directly concerned; his most important single book is *Democracy and Leadership*.[9]

A regrettable error, for which I think Babbitt himself was partly responsible, has led, within the last ten years or so, to people looking into his doctrine for something which is not there: the search has been unfortunate both for those who thought they found it and those who have repudiated his views because they did not find it. His mind was in one sense profoundly philosophical; he had an intuitive apprehension of certain – but not all – essentials. But of philosophical technique he had none; and in his writings you will find no coherent system, but some apparently important inconsistencies.[10] He was by temperament too extreme an individualist to be a system-builder or the founder of a school. He elaborated a way of life that served for him; other men must find their own. Any attempt to present his works as a body of canonical writings must end in failure, and worse. I have in mind the attempt, a few years ago, by a number of his devoted pupils to present "humanism" as almost a proprietary medicine recommended for those who cannot "believe" yet who abominate the radical materialism which is offered as an alternative. I have every sympathy, though a little irritability, with people in this position. But I maintain that their "humanism" would collapse like a house of cards the moment the support gives way; and the support which keeps humanism erect is simply the existence in the world of a body of people – however small that body may become – who are convinced of the reality of the Christian supernatural order and of the operation of the supernatural in the world. And one piece of evidence is that another "humanism," a damnable infringement of patent, which the advocates of the first must abhor, has already been put upon the market in America by some liberal "ministers."[11] We must regret deeply that Babbitt's attitude towards Christianity remained, in spite of his sometimes deceptive references to "religion," definitely obdurate.[12] Writing so soon after his death, however, we may be permitted to regret, more, that a certain inflexibility, or *raideur*,[13] or almost excessive integrity of doctrine, did not allow him to recognize as disciples some who went too far for him as well as some who did not go far enough, but who acknowledge to him a very great debt, and revere his memory in affection, admiration and gratitude.[14]

A letter from Mr. Ezra Pound appears amongst the Correspondence; this would not be the place in which to refer to it, except that it animadverts upon the Commentary for last quarter.[15] I cannot understand why Mr. Pound should have bothered to write it, unless he wishes to deny outright the point which the Commentary attempted to make; but if that was his purpose, he has carried it out with unnecessary delicacy of periphrasis. He cannot suppose me to be wholly unacquainted with the person or the writings of Major Douglas, since, to give credit where due, it was Mr. Pound who introduced me to both the person and the writings a good many years ago.[16] Nor can Mr. Pound justly suppose that I and perhaps several other contributors to the *Criterion*, are anything but friendly to the theory. Perhaps there is a more convinced acceptance of the diagnosis than the remedy; but it is easier for the lay mind to distinguish between diagnoses of a malady of which we are all aware, than between schemes any one of which may ignore important considerations which we have not been trained to look for. I hope that Major Douglas is right from top to bottom and copper-plated; but whether he is right or wrong does not matter a fig to my argument for the priority of ethics over politics. Indeed, if there is an economic remedy at hand, then the considerations I have put forward seem to me all the more pertinent. I may be wholly in error. Possibly the difficulty is merely that Mr. Pound is interested in public affairs primarily as an artist – and with much greater solicitude, it should not be necessary to add, for other artists than for himself; and I am inclined to approach public affairs from the point of view of a moralist.[17] As for morals, I will offer Mr. Pound, if he cares to use it for admonishing me the admirable phrase addressed by the Director of Talks to the gallant gentleman who offered to take part in a broadcast discussion of Air-Bombing: *the subject is not at the moment exercising the public mind and it would be better to wait until some turn of circumstances gives it a more topical value*.[18]

T.S.E.

NOTES

1. The entire second paragraph of this "Commentary" was reprinted in the memoir TSE contributed to *Irving Babbitt: Man and Teacher*, ed. Frederick Manchester and Odell Shepard (New York: Putnam, 1941), 101-04.

2. Babbitt died on 15 July 1933. TSE visited Babbitt twice in Nov 1932 during his time at Harvard, but further visits could not be made due to Babbitt's ill health.

3. *Literature and the American College: Essays in Defense of the Humanities* (1908); *The New Laokoon: An Essay on the Confusion of the Arts* (1910): TSE's signed copy is in the Houghton.

4. TSE took Babbitt's course French 17, "Literary Criticism in France with Special Reference to the Nineteenth Century," at Harvard throughout the academic year 1909-10. The content of this seminar formed the basis of Babbitt's *The Masters of Modern French Criticism* (1912), which TSE placed on the reading list for his 1916 Syllabus of a Course of Six Lectures on Modern French Literature (1:476).

5. In *Democracy and Leadership* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1924), Babbitt declared: "Any one can convince himself of the startling relevancy to existing conditions of Aristotle's 'Politics' in particular, especially now that we have begun in this country to slip our constitutional moorings and to drift towards a direct or unlimited democracy" (150-51). La Fontaine's *Fables* (1668-94) were often held up as a model of French classicism.

6. Babbitt's intense dislike of Rousseau's philosophy made a lifelong impression upon TSE. On 10 Dec 1928, TSE told Herbert Grierson that regarding Babbitt's attack on Rousseau "I follow him all the way" (*L4* 351).

7. At Harvard, Babbitt was a strong critic of President Charles W. Eliot's educational reforms that had transformed a traditional humanist education into a utilitarian program focused on applied knowledge. In *Democracy and Leadership*, Babbitt argued, "The new education has been summed up by President Eliot in the phrase: training for service and power. We are all coming together more and more in this idea of service. But, though service is supplying us in a way with a convention, it is not, in either the humanistic or the religious sense, supplying us with standards. In the current sense of the word it tends rather to undermine standards" (303). He went on to criticize John Dewey's belief in the child's natural desire to serve, concluding: "we have been permitting Professor Dewey and his kind to have an influence on our education that amounts in the aggregate to a national calamity" (313). TSE shared Babbitt's distaste for Dewey's liberal democratic educational ideals. On 27 Feb 1926, TSE told Herbert Read that he doubted whether reading Dewey was "worth the trouble" (*L3* 89). On 16 June 1932, TSE declined Allen Tate's essay on Dewey for the *Criterion* on the basis that "very few people here are familiar with Dewey's work."

8. TSE's school education in Greek and Latin was less extensive than at a traditional fee-paying British "public school," where Classics remained at the center of the curriculum during the nineteenth century. On 3 Feb 1929, TSE related to his mother details of a conversation with Babbitt about his education: "I was one of the victims of the 'elective system.' I have always regretted that as an undergraduate I did not stick to Latin and Greek, and some mathematics, and leave alone all the things I dabbled in year after year. As I said to Babbitt, the old system by which a student merely chose his courses in any combination according to caprice, really did the most harm to the most active minds" (*L4* 411).

9. In "The Idea of a Literary Review" (1926), TSE included *Democracy and Leadership* among six books exemplifying the "modern tendency" toward "classicism" defined as "a higher and clearer conception of Reason, and a more severe and serene control of the emotions by Reason" (2:765), terms which recall Babbitt's *Literature and the American College*: "The classical spirit, in its purest form, feels itself consecrated to the service of a high, impersonal reason. Hence its sentiment of restraint and discipline, its sense of proportion and pervading law" (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1908), 174. On 16 Dec 1925, TSE told Gorham Munson that in *Democracy and Leadership* Babbitt was constantly "leading up to the point of Christian ethics – just avoiding the bankruptcy of the '*inner* check'" (*L2* 801). On 29 Apr 1927, TSE repeated this point to Roger Chitty: "Babbitt's (unconscious) relation to orthodox Christianity: his doctrine of Grace, in *Democracy and Leadership*, is singularly near to Christianity, and in my opinion cannot be made acceptable without Christianity" (*L3* 491). However, in a letter to John Gould Fletcher of 15 Aug 1927, TSE refers to *Democracy and Leadership* as a "great book" (*L3* 629).

10. In "Religion without Humanism," TSE remarks: "I found no discipline in humanism; only a little intellectual discipline from a little study of philosophy" (4.39). In a letter of 22 Feb 1929 to Allen Tate, TSE was more explicit about the philosophical shortcomings of humanism: "the humanists in general, do suffer from lack of philosophical training. It is this philosophising against a literary, and academic-literary at that, background, which makes them talk as if there was a philosophy explicit in Homer or Virgil or Sophocles" (*L4* 446). On 17 Aug 1929, TSE recounted to Ramon Fernandez his debates with "the American Humanists, who are woefully unphilosophical" (*L4* 585). In "A Humanist Theory of Value" (*Criterion*, Jan 1930), translated by TSE, Fernandez himself remarked that: "The American humanists, with whom *The Criterion*

has lately concerned itself, are essayists rather than philosophers. They do not seem to have tested their notions by a rigorous critique, and are easily entrapped in their own pretentions" (228).

11. In "Religion without Humanism" (1930), TSE examines the "American New Humanism" at length (4.36).

12. In *Democracy and Leadership*, after expressing his respect for Christian humility, Babbitt explained: "I differ from the Christian, however, in that my interest in the higher will and the power of veto it exercises over man's expansive desires is humanistic rather than religious" (6). In a letter to Paul Elmer More of 12 Feb 1929, TSE said that he thought "the religious instinct was very strong" in Babbitt "even if diverted into other channels" (*L4* 432).

13. *raideur*: stiffness

14. On 12 July 1929, TSE informed Frank McEachran: "Many years ago I was myself a pupil of Babbitt and although I have now taken issue with him I still feel under a very great debt to him. I consider him one of the most important minds of our time" (*L4* 546). On 30 Dec 1929, TSE told More that he feared "the betrayal of Babbitt by his disciples – instead of developing the philosophy, they are apt merely to reiterate with less vitality" (*L4* 745). In his unpublished letter to the Editor of the *Bookman* (31 Mar 1930), TSE warned: "My chief apprehension about 'humanism' has been lest the teaching of Mr. Babbitt should be transformed, by a host of zealous disciples, into the hard and fast dogma of a new ethical church, or something between a church and a political party" (4.86).

15. In a letter from Rapallo, dated 26 June, Pound disputed TSE's "conception of the good life for the individual" voiced in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1933, drawing attention to the "Eleventh Year of the Fascist Revolution" in Italy and the "remedies" propounded by Major Douglas's Social Credit theory. TSE concluded: "Economics are about as complicated as a gasoline engine and ignorance of them is not excusable even in prime ministers and other irresponsible relics of a disreputable era" ("Correspondence," *Criterion*, Oct 1933, 128).

16. On 24 Mar 1920, TSE told Sydney Schiff: "I met Major Douglas not long ago at Pound's and liked him. His book [*Economic Democracy*] is interesting, but fearfully difficult and obscurely written" (*L1* 455).

17. In his preface to the book version of the Page-Barbour Lectures, which he delivered at Virginia University in May 1933, TSE declared: "I ascended the platform of these lectures only in the role of moralist" (*ASG* 12).

18. On the contrary, on 10 Nov 1932, the Conservative Party leader Stanley Baldwin caused widespread alarm in Britain when he told Parliament in the disarmament debate that "The bomber will always get through." "Mr. Baldwin on Aerial Warfare," *Times* (11 Nov 1932), 7.

Housman on Poetry

A review of *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, by A. E. Housman[1]

Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1933. Pp. 51.

The Criterion: A Literary Review, 13 (Oct 1933) 151-54

It has long been known to the majority of those who really care about such matters, that Mr. A. E. Housman is one of the few living masters of English prose; and that on those subjects on which he chooses to exercise his talents, there is no one living who can write better. We hope that he may consent to collect his scattered prose writings: the immortal Preface to Manilius is not so accessible as it ought to be.[2] In the present short essay, which was the Leslie Stephen lecture for this year, Mr. Housman is addressing himself to a larger audience, and has adapted himself perfectly to the requirements of such an occasion; and this lecture will serve admirably to introduce his prose to those who are unacquainted with it.

Mr. Housman's prose owes its distinction to the power which separates all first-class prose from the merely efficient: a certain emotional intensity. I say "a certain" merely as a reminder that you cannot abstract completely an identity recognizable in all great prose. Nor is this intensity to be confounded with explicit emotion arising from or suitably infused into the subject-matter, such as indignation, scorn or enthusiasm. It is the intensity of the artist, and is capable of informing any subject-matter, even the most abstract, the most arid, or the most impersonal, narrative, expository, or scientifically descriptive. The present subject, however, gives Mr. Housman a wider range than those with which he is accustomed to deal; for he is both a nineteenth (or twentieth) century romantic poet and an eighteenth-century wit; and here, in his appreciation and his expression, he is able to expose both aspects in happy union.

We must keep in mind that this essay is a lecture; and the exigencies of a popular lecture require the author to select his points very carefully, to aim at form and proportion rather than connected profundity, and to avoid going too deeply into anything which is, for the purposes of the moment, another problem. We must not, in short, judge a lecture on Poetry as if it was a book on Aesthetics. The author may himself walk the straight line, but if he is to say anything at all in the time it is difficult for him, if not impossible, not to make assertions which, if pressed firmly and indefatigably by an unfriendly critic, will not yield a concentrated drop of heresy. I think that such a critic might be able to extract (1) the Essence of Poetry Theory, (2) the Pure Poetry Theory, (3) the Physiological Theory. None of these theories can be flatly denied without equal error; I do not believe that Mr. Housman maintains any of them to a vicious degree; I mention them in the hope of sparing other critics the trouble of denouncing Mr. Housman for what he does not maintain.

Repeated meditations led me first to suspect, that there are surprisingly few things that can be said about Poetry; and of these few, the most turn out either to be false or to say nothing of significance. There are a great many things worth saying about one kind of poetry or another; and a good many might not have been said if their authors had not been under the impression that they were talking about all Poetry, when they were only talking about the kind of poetry they liked. Those who indulge in the Essence of Poetry fantasy are given to using "touchstones," or test lines, which are almost always true poetry, and usually very great poetry.[3] What none of them gives us, yet what we are apt to delude ourselves into believing they give us, is an absolute dividing line between Poetry and Not-Poetry. Mr. Housman does not actually say that the poetry of the eighteenth century (by which he means primarily Dryden and Pope) is not poetry, or rather he seems to say both that it is and is not; but it seems to me, with all due respect, that he is giving himself unnecessary pains.[4] We know that there has been much greater poetry both before and since, and that is all that we need. You can assert that Pope was a poet, or you can assert that he was not a poet; if you enjoy his poetry it does not matter, and if you do not enjoy it that does not matter either. Whichever assertion you make will depend upon some definition of Poetry, explicit or implicit, which you cannot compel anyone else to accept. I feel a certain sympathy with Mr. Housman's acid comments on the poetry of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, because I suspect that both have lately been for some amateurs a fashion rather than a taste.[5] But when he suggests that the "poetry" and the "wit" in the metaphysicals can be separated as the sound and rotten parts of an apple or a banana with a knife, I am more than doubtful.[6]

When Mr. Housman asks himself: "Am I capable of recognizing poetry if I come across it?" [32-33] I would unhesitatingly answer for him, so far as one can for any human being, in the affirmative. But there is more to it than that. You cannot divide human beings, in this respect, as you might separate compasses which are true from those which have more or less deviation. Mr. Housman's quotations, in this lecture, show about as sensitive and refined a perception as any human being can aspire to. But, in this way, is he quite fair to Dryden? and what is much more important, for here he is concerned with a poet for whom he feels almost unqualified admiration, is he quite fair to Blake?[7] I am sure that Blake would not be happy about it, but we have not here to do with Blake's feelings, but with the Problem of Meaning. There is probably no ground for taking issue with Mr. Housman; and I have no space here to develop the difficulties involved in any theory; but I cannot leave the subject without at least affirming the extraordinary complexity of the problem, and the mazes of intellectual subtlety into which it is bound to lead the conscientious enquirer. "Meaning is of the intellect, poetry is not" [38]. I should not like to deny this, still less to assert it; I am in the same quandary as Mr. Housman is with Pope. For what do we mean by meaning? and what by intellect? "Poetry indeed seems to me more physical than intellectual" [46]. Well, here again, is something I should not like to deny; but I am not sure that I know what "physical" and "intellectual" mean. But from the bottom of page 47 to the end of the lecture on page 51 Mr. Housman has given us an account of his own experience in writing poetry which is important evidence. Observation leads me to believe that different poets may compose in very different ways; my experience (for what that is worth) leads me to believe that Mr. Housman is recounting the authentic processes of a real poet. "I have seldom," he says, "written poetry unless I was rather out of health" [49]. I believe that I understand that sentence.[8] If I do, it is a guarantee – if any guarantee of that nature is wanted – of the quality of Mr. Housman's poetry.

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Housman, the Kennedy Professor of Latin in Cambridge, delivered this, the annual Leslie Stephen Lecture, on 9 May 1933. The title of TSE's review, untitled in the *Criterion*, is from the wrapper (Gallup 227).

2. See Housman's edition of *M. Manilii Astronomica* by Marcus Manilius (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1932).

3. In "The Study of Poetry" (1880), Matthew Arnold developed his objective method for judging a poet's work by comparing it to "touchstones," single lines or passages of poetry from the great poets (he gives examples from Homer, Sophocles, Dante, Shakespeare, Milton,

Goethe, and Wordsworth); the critic should aim "to have always in one's mind lines and expressions of the great masters, and to apply them as a touchstone to other poetry."

4. "There is also such a thing as sham poetry," Housman declares. "In English the great historical example is certain verse produced abundantly and applauded by high and low in what for literary purposes is loosely called the eighteenth century: not a hundred years accidentally begun and ended by chronology, but a longer period lying between Samson Agonistes in 1671 and the Lyrical Ballads in 1798, and including as an integral part and indeed as its most potent influence the mature work of Dryden" (16-17).

5. For TSE's reflections on the difference between fashion and taste, see his review of E. E. Kellett's *Fashion in Literature: A Study in Changing Taste* (4.362).

6. "There was a whole age of English in which the place of poetry was usurped by something . . . which possessed the proper and specific name of wit: . . . Simile and metaphor were their great engrossing pre-occupation, and were prized the more in proportion as they were further fetched. . . . their object was to startle by novelty and amuse by ingenuity a public whose one wish was to be so startled and amused. . . . and poetry, as a label for this particular commodity, is not appropriate" (13-15).

7. "For me the most poetical of all poets is Blake. I find his lyrical note as beautiful as Shakespeare's and more beautiful than anyone else's; and I call him more poetical than Shakespeare, even though Shakespeare has so much more poetry, because poetry in him preponderates more than in Shakespeare over everything else, and instead of being confounded in a great river can be drunk pure from a slender channel of its own" (40).

8. TSE quoted part of this passage in a note to the "Conclusion" (31 Mar 1933) of his Norton lectures, in support of his own creative process as being "less like what we know as positive pleasure, than a sudden relief from an intolerable burden" (4.686); at the end of the note, he states that he takes "added satisfaction in the fact that I only read Mr. Housman's essay some time after my own lines were written" (4.693, n.1).

Report on *The Listener* Poems

TSE wrote this unpublished report at the invitation of Janet Adam Smith, assistant editor of the *Listener*, who wrote to TSE on 11 Oct 1933 to request his assessment of the poetry published in the BBC's weekly magazine. Following complaints from readers, including one correspondent who bemoaned a "modernist cult of ugliness" evident in the published poems ("'Modernist' Poetry," *Listener*, 12 July 1933, 50), Sir John Reith, director-general of the BBC, summoned Adam Smith in order to discuss the contents of a four-page "Poetry Supplement" which published poems by W. H. Auden, Arthur Ball, John Hewitt, John Lehmann, C. Day Lewis, Charles Madge, Herbert Read, Bernard Spencer and T. H. White. According to Adam Smith, Reith was "particularly concerned" by Auden's long poem "The Witnesses." Adam Smith defended her selection to TSE: "I myself feel we have been all too respectable, and can far more justly be condemned, on the evidence of the poems as a whole, for stodginess than for revolutionary or extremist tendencies." TSE sent his report to her on 18 Oct, asking that his comments "be considered confidential and for the inspection only of those who need to see it for the purpose for which it was written. I do not wish to hurt any feelings." He suggested "that a fee of ten guineas would be reasonable for putting some of my professional secrets at the disposal of *The Listener*." The TS is in the BBC Written Archives Centre, Caversham.

I have been asked to give my opinion of a series of short pieces of verse by contemporary writers which have appeared in The Listener between February 1931 and the present time. As the terms of reference are rather large it might be well to consider first upon what grounds a weekly periodical is justified in publishing specimens of contemporary verse, and with what frequency, and on what principles it should choose verse to publish.

A weekly may allocate space either for publishing a little of as many writers as possible, or a good deal of a few authors of exceptional merit. There are two objections to the latter plan. One is formal: in a periodical appearing so frequently, it is much more practical to allot a little space every week than a good deal of space at rare intervals. The other is material: there are not enough good poets of established reputation: and the poets of established reputation are those who have nothing to gain by periodical – especially weekly periodical – publication. While I believe that periodicals should pay as much for poetry as they can, and that poetry should be better paid than prose, yet it would remain certain that the amount of money to be made in this way by serious poetry is derisible, and that the one strong motive is advertisement. It is only the younger poets to whom a weekly can appeal on this ground; when the best older poets give you contributions, you may regard it as an act of charity on their part. For the first ten years of his working life a poet has something to gain by having his verse seen occasionally in weeklies; later, he has nothing to gain and indeed something to lose. On both moral and practical grounds therefore a weekly, if it publishes poetry at all, should look to the younger writers, which implies publishing a larger number of small pieces by many writers, rather than a small number of large pieces by a few writers.

I am inclined to believe also that the public for an intelligent weekly prefers to have its small weekly dose of poetry, rather than occasional larger doses. The format adopted by *The Listener*, of having the poem inset in a surround on the same page of every number, seems to be excellent.[1] The readers know where to look for the Regular Feature, and the form discountenances the suspicion, aroused by most weeklies, that the verse is there only to fill a vacant space at the foot of a column. And the quantity seems to me right: most verse is of such mediocrity that no reader can read much at a time, and take it in, without fatigue.

The question now arises as to the principle of choice. An editor may aim at choosing "anthology" pieces, that is the occasional *trouvailles*[2] of authors the bulk of whose work may be worthless. (It is only the most completely unqualified writers of verse who cannot have the luck to strike out one or two such pieces in a lifetime). But such pieces are not so easily come by as one might think: I speak from ten years' experience in reading masses of manuscript verse in Britain, Ireland, America and the Dominions and Colonies.[3] I suspect that the inferior poet is more likely to submit his more pretentious, rather than his more honest pieces. There is happily another aim that we may pursue. We may take up the young poets who seem to have any *promise*, and give each of them a number of chances, over a period of several years, until we are forced to the conclusion that his promise has not been fulfilled. I must affirm my belief that even the most gifted poetry editor must be content to have a great many more failures than successes, and that it is impossible to be sure of genius at first sight. Poetic greatness requires a certain moral stamina which cannot be proved by a versifier's first writings.

In taking up and nursing young writers in this way a periodical can justify its publication of verse. A weekly has advantages over periodicals appearing at less frequent intervals. It can give a little help – in this way of

Advertisement of which I spoke – to a much larger number of writers; and accordingly the odds, so to speak, are not nearly so long against the editor as in the case of a Quarterly.[4] I have myself followed the practice of keeping a dossier for each young poet in whom I discerned any promise; not with the expectation of drawing upon it for publication, but in order to compare his writing over a period of several years, in the hope of coming to some conclusion about him. I have found this often helpful. It must also be borne in mind that a larger number of young writers are worth encouraging than those who will ultimately devote themselves usefully to poetry: among these beginners are some who have talent, but have not yet discovered the exact direction in which that talent ought to be exercised; for whom poetry is only a transitional mode of expression, but who through their verse essays come to learn their true vocation. These also are to be encouraged.

From the point of view of a service to the reading public, as well as that to the young writers, it seems to me that – I judge from the character of the other contents – a consistent policy of this kind should appeal to readers of The Listener. This weekly seems to aim at a public which is curious and avid of information about the latest facts, ideas and discoveries in contemporary art and thought; its readers, so far as they are interested in poetry, must want to know what sorts of verse are being written.[5] From this point of view, whether the verse is of the highest quality does not matter much: what you want to be able to say confidently to your readers is that this is representative of the best that is being written by men and women of a certain generation. At least it will serve as a document upon the time, and if the time should not produce any poetry worth preserving, that would be an interesting fact in itself. By publishing verse in this way, you should have every hope also of publishing something by the one or two poets who will be recognised ten or twenty years hence, and thus building up a future reputation for the paper.

I should not however recommend pursuing this method to the entire exclusion of the other. What I have just outlined is what seems to me the only aim that an editor can justifiably and consistently follow: but at the same time he should keep his eyes open for the occasional charming piece, of some positive accomplishment and no promise whatsoever, which may now and then turn up from unexpected sources. It is also a good thing, now and then, to publish some small piece by one of the few older poets of deserved reputation, most of whom from time to time produce trifles which they might be willing to print in this way.

II

I have examined the collection of poems published in The Listener from early in 1931 to the present time. The great majority of the contributors are known to me in one way or another; some have appeared in The Criterion, and more have several times offered contributions to The Criterion.[6] Except for the absence of American writers – I note only one[7] – English and American poetry at the present time are fundamentally very much alike, and equally good and bad – it seems to me very representative. One could, no doubt, think of some equally good writers who are absent; and no doubt one could pick out a few poems included which are below the possible level: but both of these attempts seem to be irrelevant to the opinion which I am asked to give. For good or bad, the collection seems to be representative of the verse of its time. As one must expect of any time, the great majority is mediocre and conventional: it reveals the occasional influence of myself, Mr. Yeats, Mr. Pound and Gerard Hopkins, and some other more discredited originals.[8] (I am not concerned with the small number of already known poets who are represented, but with the younger rank and file). But while not encouraging for poetry, the selection is on the whole very creditable to The Listener. I do not say that the poetry is positively better than the kind that Sir John Squire would select: but there is this great difference: that Squire's kind of poetry is now completely out of date, and this is not.[9] In short, I do not believe that The Listener could be any more conservative without making itself ridiculous. It is I think the one London weekly (with the possible exception of The New English Weekly) in which I would not dissuade any promising young poet from seeking to appear.[10]

A few of the writers have appeared in The Criterion: two of them, W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender, have had volumes published on my recommendation by Faber & Faber.[11] Of all the younger poets, Auden is the one who has interested me the most deeply, though I feel that it is impossible to predict whether he will manifest the austerity and concentration necessary for poetry of the first rank, or whether he will dissipate his talents in wit and verbal brilliance.[12]

It may be irrelevant to mention my belief that beyond a point it becomes nullifying for an editor to try to give the public the sort of poetry it likes.

Those who like poetry at all do not like sorts of poetry, but the work of individual poets. It is a good thing, I believe, to give the "public," from time to time poems by individual poets whom it already likes; but it can never serve any purpose to give it imitations of the poetry it already likes. A poem by Kipling is a good thing to have, if you can get it; but not an imitation of Kipling.[13] Imitations of certain more recent poets are bound to creep in: because it is often almost impossible to tell whether a young poet is cleverly imitating or whether he is being influenced. To be influenced by any earlier poet is justifiable; imitation, on the other hand, is only just pardonable when the poet imitated is himself fairly new. It is natural for a young writer to be carried away by anything good and new, but he may outgrow it.[14]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. In fact, not all poems in the *Listener* were published in this format; Stephen Spender's poem "After They Have Tired" was inset in the text of TSE's broadcast "Christianity and Communism," *Listener* (16 Mar 1932), 382.

2. *trouvaille*: a lucky find

3. TSE had been reading poetry submissions to the *Criterion* for ten years, and to Faber & Faber for eight years.

4. From June 1928, the *Criterion* reverted to its original quarterly publication.

5. Launched in Jan 1929 to publish the text of broadcast talks on general culture that could not be dealt with by the BBC's *Radio Times*, the *Listener* quickly built up a circulation of approximately 28,000. TSE first appeared in the *Listener* in June 1929; his most recent published broadcast talks were contributions to a series on contemporary thought entitled "The Modern Dilemma" (4.422, 436, 446, 464).

6. Of the poets published in the *Listener* since 1931, Conrad Aiken, W. H. Auden, Richard Church, Harold Monro, Edwin Muir, Herbert Read, Stephen Spender, and W. J. Turner also had poetry published in the *Criterion* by the time of TSE's report.

7. Conrad Aiken was the single American poet.

8. In his Harvard undergraduate class on modern literature, TSE argued that Yeats's influence "so far as English and American poetry is concerned" begins in his "post-Pound period" (4.774). In a subsequent class, TSE remarks of Hopkins: "Very different from Pound but with him combines to influence poetry of present" (4.781).

9. Squire edited the popular literary monthly the *London Mercury*, known for its neo-Georgian taste in poetry. Squire wrote a hostile and uncomprehending review of *The Waste Land* for the issue of Oct 1923. When R. A. Scott-James took over the editorship of the *London Mercury* in 1934, he started publishing poetry by the Auden generation.

10. TSE joined the editorial board of *New English Weekly* in 1934. In addition to prose, he published his poems "Rannoch, by Glencoe" and "Words for an Old Man" there in 1935; his

three wartime Quartets – "East Coker" (1940), "The Dry Salvages" (1941), and "Little Gidding" (1942) – were first published as "supplements" in the *New English Weekly*.

11. Auden's *Poems* (1930) and *The Orators* (1932) were published by Faber on TSE's recommendation. In 1933, Spender's *Poems* were published by Faber with the blurb (composed by TSE): "If Auden is the satirist of this poetical renascence, Spender is its lyric poet."

12. In a letter to Herbert Read of 11 Dec 1930, TSE confided: "I chiefly worry about Auden's ethical principles and convictions, not about his technical ability; or rather, I think that if a man's ethical and religious views and convictions are feeble or limited and incapable of development, then his technical development is restricted" (*L5* 428)

13. In his Harvard class on modern literature of 9 Feb, TSE praised Kipling's poetry for its metric: "You can't invent rhythms and verse forms like that, though anyone can imitate" (4.761).

14. Janet Adam Smith later recalled that TSE's report "at first glance disappointed me. I suppose that, ardent in the defence of the poets I admired and longing to rout the Philistines, I had hoped for a glowing testimonial from one whom I regarded as an ally in the fight. Mr Eliot did not supply that at all. There was no glow of enthusiasm in his grave and measured sentences. But he supplied something much more valuable, both in its immediate effect on Sir John Reith and in its stimulus to me to think more rigorously about the business of choosing poems for the paper." "T. S. Eliot and 'The Listener,'" *Listener*, 1869 (21 Jan 1965), 105.

Measure for Measure at the Old Vic

To the Editor of *The Times*

The Times (14 Dec 1933), 10

Sir, – If I am not too tardy, and if you have the space for this kind of brief communication, I should like to endorse Mr. John Gielgud's appeal in your issue of December 8 on behalf of the current production of *Measure for Measure* at the Old Vic.[1] The opportunity to see a play – and a very great play – of Shakespeare which is so rarely produced should be enough of an attraction; but it has been also an opportunity to see some very fine acting and, apart from a few minor blemishes, as satisfactory a presentation as one is likely ever to find. As the blame for any lack of popularity of the production cannot be laid upon the players, it must be attributed to Shakespeare; but even those whose principles prevent them from approving either the subject-matter or the profoundly Christian spirit of the play might profit by seeing it so very well performed.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

24, RUSSELL SQUARE, W.C.1, DEC. 11. T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. John Gielgud (1904-2000), then a young Shakespearean actor who had achieved stardom with his performances of Richard II and Hamlet in his first two seasons of the Old Vic (1929-30), and who had become its leading actor, was not in the cast of *Measure for Measure*, which ran from 4 to 20 Dec; however, he wrote in the issue of 8 Dec to urge the public to see an "unfamiliar and unpopular" play "which makes me very proud to belong to the English theatre. . . . I wish it might be shown to the English provincial towns and to New York, for it seems to me quite complete and perfect in its way, entirely original, and modern in conception, and yet executed with a sureness and power worthy of the best and oldest traditions of our stage" (10). The production featured Charles Laughton as Angelo, Athene Seyler as Mistress Overdone, Lawrence Baskcome as Pompey, and James Mason as Claudio, in performances which the reviewer of the *Times* found "rich and satisfying, full of subtle penetration and expressive gestures" (5 Dec, 12). TSE wrote to Alistair Cook on 8 Dec: "The new company at the Old Vic made an extremely good job of *Measure for Measure* which I saw last night. Charles Laughton is not yet a perfect Shakespearean actor, and apologises for not knowing how to speak blank verse, but he is extremely keen, and I think may be really first-rate in time." TSE taught the play in his 1918 Extension course, focusing on "the thought and versification" (1.755), took the epigraph for "Gerontion" from the play (III.1.32-34), and in "Hamlet" (1919) described it as a "profoundly interesting play of 'intractable' material and astonishing versification" (2.124).

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A. Chronology of Lectures and Readings

26 Sept 1932: Arrival in Boston, MA, on forty-fourth birthday
17 Oct: Reading at Wellesley College, Wellesley, MA
4 Nov: First Norton Lecture, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA: "Introduction"
15 Nov: Radcliffe Club of Boston, "The Experience of Poetry"
21 Nov: Unidentified address, as a Corresponding Member, at the annual meeting and dinner of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts
25 Nov: Second Norton Lecture: "Apology for the Countess of Pembroke"
1 Dec: "The Bible as Scripture and as Literature," Women's Alliance, King's Chapel, Boston
2 Dec: Third Norton Lecture: "The Age of Dryden"
9 Dec: Fourth Norton Lecture: "Wordsworth and Coleridge"
5 Jan 1933: "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry," Scripps College, Claremont, CA
6 Jan: "The Development of Taste in Poetry," University of California, Los Angeles, CA
9 Jan: "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry," University of Southern California, Los Angeles
11 Jan: "The Development of Taste in Poetry," University of California, Berkeley, CA
16 Jan: "The Study of Shakespeare Criticism," Washington University, St. Louis, MO
19 Jan: "The Tendency of Some Modern Poetry," University of Minnesota, Minneapolis/St. Paul
26 Jan: "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry," Twentieth Century Club, University of Buffalo, NY
30 Jan: First Turnbull Lecture: "Toward a Definition of Metaphysical Poetry," Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD
1 Feb: Second Turnbull Lecture: "The Conceit in Donne and Crashaw"
2 Feb: "The Tendency of Some Modern Poetry," Poetry Society of Maryland, Baltimore
3 Feb: Third Turnbull Lecture: "Laforgue and Corbière in our Time"

7 Feb: First meeting of English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day; every Tuesday, Thursday, and occasional Saturdays through May 4, Harvard University

17 Feb: Fifth Norton Lecture: "Shelley and Keats"

19 Feb: Reading at Brown University, Providence, RI

23 Feb: "English Poets as Letter Writers," Yale University, New Haven, CT

24 Feb: "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry," Smith College, Northampton, MA

25 Feb: Informal talk to Blackstick Honorary Literary Society ("The Greatness of a Poet or Writer") and reading, Mount Holyoke College, South Hadley, MA

3 Mar: Sixth Norton Lecture: "Matthew Arnold"

9 Mar: Reading announced in Feb *Amherst Student* (no report), Amherst, MA

13 Mar: Visit to Milton Academy, Milton, MA; entertained at tea by faculty; possibly gave undated talk, "Chat to English Teachers" (in outline) on the teaching of modern poetry; invited to give commencement address

14 Mar: Reading of poetry at Eliot House, Harvard University

17 Mar: Seventh Norton Lecture: "The Modern Mind"

18 Mar: Unidentified address to Signet Alumni Association, in the Club House, Harvard University

23 Mar: "The Bible and English Literature," Princeton University, Princeton, NJ

24 Mar: "The Study of Shakespeare Criticism," Haverford College, Haverford, PA

31 Mar: Final Norton Lecture: "Conclusion"

3 Apr: "Two Masters" [revised as "The Modern Dilemma"] Boston Association of Unitarian Ministers, King's Chapel, Boston

6 Apr: "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry," Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME

10 Apr: "Two Masters," Clerical Association of Massachusetts, Jamaica Plain, MA

20 Apr: "Edward Lear and the Meaning of Poetry," The New School of Social Research, New York, NY

21 Apr: "The Verse of John Milton," Columbia University, New York

24 Apr: “Modern Education and the Classics,” the Classical Club, Lowell House, Harvard University

27 Apr: Lecture on “Mallarmé” announced in *NY World-Telegram* of 21 Apr; reading and discussion of poems substituted, The New School of Social Research

28 Apr: “The Tendency of Some Modern Poetry,” with readings of his poems as examples, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, PA

3 May: “Edward Lear and Modern Poetry,” Wellesley College

6 May: Attends the Experimental Theater of Vassar College world premiere production of *Sweeney Agonistes*, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, NY

7 May: Informal talk at Vassar College on “Modern Poetry,” illustrated by a reading

10 May: First Page-Barbour Lecture: “The Meaning of Tradition,” University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA; see volume 5 for Page-Barbour Lectures, published as *After Strange Gods* (1934)

11 May: Second Page-Barbour Lecture: “Modern Poetry”

12 May: Third Page-Barbour Lecture: “Three Prose Writers”

29 May: Unidentified address at the Anglo-Catholic Oxford Centenary, Elizabeth, NJ

6 June: Receives Honorary Degree at Columbia University

17 June: Commencement address at Milton Academy

23 June: Sails from Montreal to Liverpool

The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism: Studies in the Relation of Criticism to Poetry in England, by T. S. Eliot

London: Faber & Faber, 1933, 1964. Pp. 156[1]

The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures for 1932-33[2]

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PREFACE TO ORIGINAL EDITION

These lectures, delivered at Harvard University during the winter of 1932-33, owe much to an audience only too ready to applaud merit and condone defect; but I am aware that such success as they had was largely dramatic, and that they will be still more disappointing to those who heard them than they will be to those who did not.[3] I should much prefer to leave my auditors with whatever impression they then received; but by the terms of the Foundation by Mr. Stillman the lectures must be submitted for publication, and within a fixed period.[4] Thus I explain my commission of another unnecessary book.

I am glad, however, of the opportunity to record in print my obligation to the President and Fellows of Harvard College; to the Norton Professorship Committee; and in particular my gratitude to Professor John Livingston Lowes; to the Master of Eliot House and Mrs. Merriman, with most pleasant memories of the Associates and Tutors of the House; to

Dr. Theodore Spencer; and to Mr. and Mrs. Alfred Dwight Sheffield for innumerable criticisms and suggestions.[5]

I much regret that while I was preparing these lectures for delivery in America, Mr. I. A. Richards was in England; and that while I was preparing them for publication in England, he was in America. I had hoped that they might have the benefit of his criticism.[6]

T.S.E.

London, August 1933.

PREFACE TO EDITION OF 1964

It is said that Yeats had more than enough of "The Lake Isle of Innisfree" as his anthology piece. In my youth "La Figlia Che Piange" was favoured as the most innocuous of my poems, but in later years I have been more fairly represented (though I should be glad to hear no more of a bang and a whimper.)[7] But with my essays I have not been so fortunate. Just as any student of contemporary literature, putting pen to paper about my criticism, is certain to pass an examination on it if he alludes to the "dissociation of sensibility" and the "objective correlative," so every anthologist wishing to include a sample of my essays will choose "Tradition and the Individual Talent" – perhaps the most juvenile and certainly the first to appear in print.[8]

I reprint *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* in the faint hope that one of these lectures may be taken instead of "Tradition and the Individual Talent" by some anthologist of the future. That, the best known of my essays, appeared in 1917, when I had taken over the assistant-editorship of *The Egoist* on Richard Aldington's being called up for military service, and before I had been asked to contribute to any other periodical.[9] The lectures which compose the present book were written during the winter of 1932-33. I had been honoured with appointment to the Charles Eliot Norton Professorship at Harvard – a position offered annually to some man of letters, American or European, for the period of one year. I did not find leisure to prepare the lectures until I arrived in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in the autumn of 1932, and so they had to be composed, under considerable pressure, during the period of my residence there. Nevertheless, after re-reading them twice, I found to my surprise that I was still prepared to accept them as a statement of my critical position.

My earliest critical essays, dating from a period when I was somewhat under the influence of Ezra Pound's enthusiasm for Remy de Gourmont, came to seem to me the product of immaturity – though I do not repudiate "Tradition and the Individual Talent."[10] The eight lectures in this volume, in spite of the fact that some of them were written in the course of delivering the series, seem to me still valid. At least, I am ashamed neither of the style nor of the matter. Not having looked at them for many years, I found them, after two readings, acceptable enough for me to hope that republication in the present form may justify itself.

As for the opening paragraph of the first lecture, I should explain that the United States were at that moment on the eve of the presidential election which brought Franklin D. Roosevelt his first term of office.[11]

T.S.E.

1963

NOTES

1. Separate dedication page: "To the Memory of Charles Whibley to whom I promised a better book." After his friend Charles Whibley died on 4 Mar 1930, TSE paid tribute to Whibley's significance as a literary scholar and political commentator in his English Association lecture, "Charles Whibley" (1931) (4.384).

2. The Charles Eliot Norton Professor of Poetry was established at Harvard University in 1925 as an annual lectureship. According to the terms of the professorship, "Poetry shall be interpreted in the broadest sense" and the chair intended for "men of high distinction and preferably of international reputation." TSE informed his mother on 28 July 1929 that several professors at Harvard "were desirous that I should be nominated at some time for the Charles Eliot Norton Professorship, but I gathered that this was unlikely to happen for several years in any case" (*L4* 555). On 27 Oct 1931, TSE accepted Harvard's offer of the Norton professorship for the academic year 1932-33 at a salary of $9,000. The appointment was announced in the *Harvard Crimson* and in the *New York Evening Post* on 15 Dec and in the *Times* on 17 Dec 1931.

TSE's lectures were written only after his arrival at Harvard on 26 Sept 1932: the eight lectures were delivered from 4 Nov to 31 Mar 1933. After his return to the United Kingdom, TSE revised the lectures during July-Aug for publication by Faber and Harvard UP. In Sept 1933, TSE corrected the proofs for the Faber edition and mailed a set to Harvard. In redesigning the format and type for American printers, as required under the Chace Act in order to secure US copyright, the editors also introduced unauthorized emendations that resulted in textual discrepancies between the two editions, which were published simultaneously on 2 Nov. On 7 Nov, TSE wrote to Paul Elmer More: "I am not pleased with the book. The lectures themselves were prepared not under the most favourable conditions; and my choice of subject was directed by the necessity of finding one which would demand the minimum of new reading and new thinking. So there is nothing new in the book, and I fear a lame conclusion." In 1964, Faber brought out a second edition, for which TSE wrote a new preface and made final corrections. The corresponding Harvard UP edition is a reprint of its first edition; it includes TSE's new preface, but the textual discrepancies remain intact. The text here follows the 1964 Faber edition.

3. In a letter of 8 Dec 1932, TSE thanked Paul Elmer More for his comments on his first three Norton lectures, "especially as the reception has been mixed and at a low temperature. My reputation is at the dangerous age at which what I write is compared (unfavourably) with something I wrote earlier."

4. The terms of the bequest by Harvard alumnus C. Chauncey Stillman (1827-1926) stipulated that "The lectures shall not have been previously printed or delivered in public. Within six months after their delivery, the manuscript shall be delivered to Harvard University, whose property this manuscript shall then become. These lectures shall be published by either the Harvard University Press or otherwise, as the Corporation of the University shall determine." TSE was given permission for Faber to be the UK publisher (Oxford UP ordinarily received the UK rights for the Norton lectures).

5. John Livingston Lowes, professor of English literature at Harvard, authored *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (1927), a study of Coleridge's sources discussed by TSE in his Norton lecture on "Wordsworth and Coleridge." Lowes, then president-elect of the Modern Language Association and coordinator of the Norton lecture series, helped to arrange TSE's appearance at the University of California, Berkeley, in Jan 1933.

Roger B. Merriman (1876-1945), professor of history and master of Eliot House, was married to Dorothea Foote (1878-1970). Alfred Dwight Sheffield (1871-1961), professor of English at Wellesley College and author of *Lectures on the Harvard Classics: Confucianism* (1909), married TSE's eldest sister Ada (1869-1943), social worker and member of the Board of the Boston Children's Mission. TSE dedicated *After Strange Gods* (1934) to Alfred and Ada.

6. Richards was resident in North America during the summer of 1933 while TSE was correcting the proofs of *UPUC*.

7. TSE's brother noted that TSE referred to "La Figlia Che Piange" (1916) in an American lecture as having a "certain low popularity" (Houghton Am 1691, 194). Here he alludes to the close of "The Hollow Men" (1925): "*This is the way the world ends / Not with a bang but a whimper*" (*CPP* 86).

8. In "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), TSE contends: "In the seventeenth century a dissociation of sensibility set in, from which we have never recovered" (2.380). In "Hamlet" (1919), TSE sets forth the theory: "The only way of expressing emotion in the form of art is by finding an 'objective correlative'; in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that *particular* emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked" (2.125). He wrote to John Hayward on 3 Mar 1944: "The history of my critical reputation, which apparently is based entirely on two sentences, one about the relation of new literature to old, and another about an 'objective correlative' (a barbarous phrase which I shudder at) would make a fabulous narrative" (King's).

9. In fact, "Tradition and the Individual Talent" was published in the *Egoist* in two parts in Sept and Nov 1919. TSE took over as assistant editor of the *Egoist* from Hilda Doolittle, wife of Richard Aldington, in June 1917.

10. TSE took his epigraph for "The Perfect Critic" (1920), the opening essay in *The Sacred Wood* (1920), from Remy de Gourmont – "Ériger en lois ses impressions personnelles, c'est le grand effort d'un homme s'il est sincère" ["The whole effort of a sincere man is to make his personal impressions into universal laws"; trans. Richard Aldington] (2.262). Pound's advocacy

of Gourmont is evident in his obituary articles "Remy de Gourmont," *Fortnightly Review*, 98 (Dec 1915) 1159-66 and *Poetry*, 7/8 (Jan 1916), 197-202.

11. Franklin D. Roosevelt (1882-1945), thirty-second president of the United States, defeated the incumbent Herbert Hoover in Nov 1932. On 24 Nov 1932, TSE wrote to Geoffrey Faber: "I don't know that the election means very much. I think that most folk voted for Roosevelt because he seemed more positively wet than Hoover; but perhaps still more because they felt that Hoover had not done much to alleviate misery, and they might as well have a change." Roosevelt took office in Mar 1933 and remained president until his death in Apr 1945.

Lecture I

Introduction

November 4th, 1932[1]

"The whole country is now excited by the political campaign, and in a condition of irrational emotion. The best of the prospect is that a reorganisation of parties seems not unlikely as an indirect result of the present contest between the Republicans and the Democrats . . . But any radical change is not to be looked for."[2]

These words occur in a letter written by Charles Eliot Norton on September 24th, 1876. The present lectures will have no concern with politics; I have begun with a political quotation only as a reminder of the varied interests of the scholar and humanist whom this foundation commemorates. The lecturer on such a foundation is fortunate who can feel, as I do, sympathy and admiration for the man whose memory the lectures are intended to keep living. Charles Eliot Norton had the moral and spiritual qualities, of a stoic kind, which are possible without the benefits of revealed religion; and the mental gifts which are possible without genius.[3] To do the useful thing, to say the courageous thing, to contemplate the beautiful thing: that is enough for one man's life. Few men have known better than he how to give just place to the claims of the public and of the private life; few men have had better opportunity, few of those having the opportunity have availed themselves of it better than he. The usual politician, the man of public affairs, is rarely able to go to the "public place" without assuming the "public face": Norton always preserved his privacy. And living as he did in a non-Christian society, and in a world which, as he saw it on both sides of the Atlantic, showed signs of decay, he maintained the standards of the humanity and humanism that he knew. He was able, even at an early age, to look upon the passing order without regret, and towards the coming order without hope. In a letter of December 1869 he speaks more strongly and more comprehensively than in that which I have quoted:

> The future is very dark in Europe, and to me it looks as if we were entering on a period quite new in history – one in which the questions on which parties will divide, and from which outbreak after outbreak

> of passion and violence will arise, will no longer be political but immediately social . . . Whether our period of economical enterprise, unlimited competition, and unrestrained individualism, is the highest stage of human progress is to me very doubtful; and sometimes when I see the existing conditions of European (to say nothing of American) social order, bad as they are for the mass alike of upper and of lower classes, I wonder whether our civilization can maintain itself against the forces which are banding together for the destruction of many of the institutions in which it is embodied, or whether we are not to have another period of decline, fall, and ruin and revival, like that of the first thirteen hundred years of our era. It would not grieve me much to know that this were to be the case. No man who knows what society at the present day really is, but must agree that it is not worth preserving on its present basis.[4*]

These are words to which many who approach contemporary problems with more dogmatic assumptions than Norton's can give assent. Yet for him the permanent importance of literature if not of dogma was a fixed point. The people which ceases to care for its literary inheritance becomes barbaric; the people which ceases to produce literature ceases to move in thought and sensibility. The poetry of a people takes its life from the people's speech and in turn gives life to it; and represents its highest point of consciousness, its greatest power and its most delicate sensibility.

In these lectures I have to deal as much or more with criticism of poetry as with poetry itself; and my subject is not merely the relation of criticism to poetry, if by that we assume that we know already what poetry is, and does, and is for. Indeed, a good part of criticism has consisted simply in the pursuit of answers to these questions. Let me start with the supposition that we do not know what poetry is, or what it does or ought to do, or of what use it is; and try to find out, in examining the relation of poetry and criticism, what the use of both of them is. We may even discover that we have no very clear idea of what *use* is; at any rate we had better not assume that we know.

I shall not begin with any general definition of what is and what is not poetry, or any discussion of whether poetry need be always in verse, or any consideration of the difference between the poetry-verse antithesis and the poetry-prose antithesis. Criticism, however, may be separated from the beginning not into two kinds, but according to two tendencies. I assume that criticism is that department of thought which either seeks to find out what poetry is, what its use is, what desires it satisfies, why it is written and why read, or recited; or which, making some conscious or unconscious assumption that we do know these things, assesses actual poetry. We may find that good criticism has other designs than these; but these are the ones which it is allowed to profess. Criticism, of course, never does find out what poetry is, in the sense of arriving at an adequate definition; but I do not know of what use such a definition would be if it were found. Nor can criticism ever arrive at any final appraisal of poetry. But there are these two theoretical limits of criticism: at one of which we attempt to answer the question "what is poetry?" and at the other "is this a good poem?" No theoretic ingenuity will suffice to answer the second question, because no theory can amount to much which is not founded upon a direct experience of good poetry; but on the other hand our direct experience of poetry involves a good deal of generalising activity.

The two questions, which represent the most abstract formulation of what is far from being an abstract activity, imply each other. The critic who remains worth reading has asked, if he has only imperfectly answered, both questions. Aristotle, in what we possess of his writings upon poetry, does, I think, quicken our appreciation of the Greek tragic dramatists; Coleridge, in his defence of the poetry of Wordsworth, is led into generalisations about poetry which are of the greatest interest; and Wordsworth, in his explanation of his own poetry, makes assertions about the nature of poetry which, if excessive, have a wider bearing than even he may have realised.[5] Mr. I. A. Richards, who ought to know, if anyone does, what equipment the scientific critic needs, tells us that "both a passionate knowledge of poetry and a capacity for dispassionate psychological analysis" are required.[6] Mr. Richards, like every serious critic of poetry, is a serious moralist as well. His ethics, or theory of value, is one which I cannot accept; or rather, I cannot accept any such theory which is erected upon purely individual-psychological foundations.[7] But his psychology of the poetic experience is based upon his own experience of poetry, as truly as his theory of value arises out of his psychology. You may be dissatisfied with his philosophical conclusions but still believe (as I do) in his discriminating taste in poetry. But if on the other hand you had no faith in the critic's ability to tell a good poem from a bad one, you would put little reliance upon the validity of his theories. In order to analyse the enjoyment and appreciation of a good poem, the critic must have experienced the enjoyment, and he must convince us of his taste. For the experience of enjoying a bad poem while thinking it is a good one is very different from that of enjoying a good poem.

We do expect the critic who theorises to know a good poem when he sees it. It is not always true that a person who knows a good poem when he sees it can tell us why it is a good poem. The experience of poetry, like any other experience, is only partially translatable into words; to begin with, as Mr. Richards says, "it is never what a poem *says* that matters, but what it *is*."[8] And we know that some people who are inarticulate, and cannot say why they like a poem, may have deeper and more discriminating sensibility than some others who can talk glibly about it; we must remember too that poetry is not written simply to provide material for conversation. Even the most accomplished of critics can, in the end, only point to the poetry which seems to him to be the real thing. Nevertheless, our talking about poetry is a part of, an extension of, our experience of it; and as a good deal of thinking has gone to the making of poetry, so a good deal may well go to the study of it. The rudiment of criticism is the ability to select a good poem and reject a bad poem; and its most severe test is of its ability to select a good *new* poem, to respond properly to a new situation. The experience of poetry, as it develops in the conscious and mature person, is not merely the sum of the experiences of good poems. Education in poetry requires an organisation of these experiences. There is not one of us who is born with, or who suddenly acquires at puberty or later, an infallible discrimination and taste. The person whose experience is limited is always liable to be taken in by the sham or the adulterate article; and we see generation after generation of untrained readers being taken in by the sham and the adulterate in its own time – indeed preferring them, for they are more easily assimilable than the genuine article. Yet a very large number of people, I believe, have the native capacity for enjoying *some* good poetry: how much, or how many degrees of capacity may profitably be distinguished, is not part of my present purpose to enquire. It is only the exceptional reader, certainly, who in the course of time comes to classify and compare his experiences, to see one in the light of others; and who, as his poetic experiences multiply, will be able to understand each more accurately. The element of enjoyment is enlarged into appreciation, which brings a more intellectual addition to the original intensity of feeling. It is a second stage in our understanding of poetry, when we no longer merely select and reject, but organise. We may even speak of a third stage, one of reorganisation; a stage at which a person already educated in poetry meets with something new in his own time, and finds a new pattern of poetry arranging itself in consequence.[9]

This pattern, which we form in our own minds out of our own reading of poetry that we have enjoyed, is a kind of answer, which we make each for himself, to the question "what is poetry?" At the first stage we find out what poetry is by reading it and enjoying some of what we read; at a later stage our perception of the resemblances and differences between what we read for the first time and what we have already enjoyed itself contributes to our enjoyment. We learn what poetry is – if we ever learn – from reading it; but one might say that we should not be able to recognise poetry in particular unless we had an innate idea of poetry in general. At any rate, the question "what is poetry?" issues quite naturally from our experience of poems. Even, therefore, although we may admit that few forms of intellectual activity seem to have less to show for themselves, in the course of history, in the way of books worth reading, than does criticism, it would appear that criticism, like any philosophical activity, is inevitable and requires no justification.[10] To ask "what is poetry?" is to posit the critical function.

I suppose that to many people the thought must have occurred, that at some periods when great poetry was written there was no written criticism; and that in some periods in which much criticism has been written the quality of the poetry has been inferior. This fact has suggested an antithesis between the critical and the creative, between critical ages and creative ages; and it is sometimes thought that criticism flourishes most at times when creative vigour is in defect. It is with such a prejudice in mind that people have coupled with "critical ages" the adjective "Alexandrian."[11] Several gross assumptions underlie this prejudice, including a confusion between several different things, and between works of very different quality, included under "criticism." I am using the term "criticism" throughout these lectures, as I hope you will discover, with a pretty narrow extension. I have no desire to extenuate the vices of the vast number of books which pass by that designation, or to flatter the lazy habit of substituting, for a careful study of the texts, the assimilation of other people's opinions. If people only wrote when they had something to say, and never merely because they wanted to write a book, or because they occupied a position such that the writing of books was expected of them, the mass of criticism would not be wholly out of proportion to the small number of critical books worth reading. Nevertheless, those who speak as if criticism were an occupation of decadence, and a symptom, if not a cause, of the creative impotence of a people, isolate the circumstances of literature, to the extent of falsification, from the circumstances of life. Such changes as that from the epic poem composed to be recited to the epic poem composed to be read, or those which put an end to the popular ballad, are inseparable from social changes on a vast scale, such changes as have always taken place and always will. W. P. Ker, in his essay on "The Forms of English Poetry," observed that:

> The art of the Middle Ages generally is corporate and social; the sculpture, for example, as it is found in the great cathedrals. With the Renaissance the motive of poetry is changed. In the Middle Ages there is a natural likeness to the Greek conditions; after the Renaissance there is a conscious and intentional reproduction among the modern nations of the conditions which prevailed in the poetry of Rome. Greek poetry in many respects is medieval; the Latin poetry of the great age is Renaissance, an imitation of types derived from Greece, with quite different circumstances and a different relation of the poet to his audience.
>
> Not that Latin or modern poetry is unsocial. It is true . . . that the tendency of modern art, including poetry, is often contrary to the popular taste of the time; the poets are often left to themselves to find their themes and elaborate their modes of expression in solitude, with results that are often found as perplexing and offensive, and as negligible, as Browning's *Sordello* was generally found to be.[12]

What is true of the major changes in the form of poetry is, I think, true also of the change from a pre-critical to a critical age. It is true of the change from a pre-philosophical to a philosophical age; you cannot deplore criticism unless you deprecate philosophy. You may say that the development of criticism is a symptom of the development, or change, of poetry; and the development of poetry is itself a symptom of social changes. The important moment for the appearance of criticism seems to be the time when poetry ceases to be the expression of the mind of a whole people. The drama of Dryden, which furnishes the chief occasion for his critical writing, is formed by Dryden's perception that the possibilities of writing in the mode of Shakespeare were exhausted; the form persists in the tragedies of such a writer as Shirley (who is much more up to date in his comedies), after the mind and sensibility of England has altered.[13] But Dryden was not writing plays for the whole people; he was writing in a form which had not grown out of popular tradition or popular requirements, a form the acceptance of which had therefore to come by diffusion through a small society. Something similar had been attempted by the Senecan dramatists.[14] But the part of society to which Dryden's work, and that of the Restoration comedians, could immediately appeal constituted something like an intellectual aristocracy; when the poet finds himself in an age in which there is no intellectual aristocracy, when power is in the hands of a class so democratised that whilst still a class it represents itself to be the whole nation; when the only alternatives seem to be to talk to a coterie or to soliloquise, the difficulties of the poet and the necessity of criticism become greater. In the essay from which I have just quoted, Ker says:

> There is no doubt that in the nineteenth century poets are more left to themselves than they were in the eighteenth, and the result is unmistakable in their strength and weakness. . . . The heroic independence of Browning, and indeed all the adventurous experimental capricious poetry of the nineteenth century, is closely related to criticism, and to the eclectic learning which ranges over the whole world in search of artistic beauty. . . . The themes are taken from all the ages and countries; the poets are eclectic students and critics, and they are justified, as explorers are justified; they sacrifice what explorers sacrifice when they leave their natural home. . . . I shall not be misunderstood if I remark that their victories bring along with them some danger, if not for themselves, at least for the fashion, the tradition, of poetry. [131-32]

The gradual changes in the function of poetry, as society alters, will, I hope, emerge somewhat after we have considered several critics as representatives of several generations. During three hundred years criticism has come to modify its assumptions and its purposes, and it will surely continue to do so. There are several forms which criticism may take; there is always a large proportion of criticism which is retrograde or irrelevant; there are always many writers who are qualified neither by knowledge of the past nor by awareness of the sensibility and the problems of the present. Our earliest criticism, under the influence of classical studies and of Italian critics, made very large assumptions about the nature and function of literature. Poetry was a decorative art, an art for which sometimes extravagant claims were made, but an art in which the same principles seemed to hold good for every civilisation and for every society; it was an art deeply affected by the rise of a new social class, only loosely (at best) associated with the Church, a class self-conscious in its possession of the mysteries of Latin and Greek. In England the critical force due to the new contrast between Latin and vernacular met, in the sixteenth century, with just the right degree of resistance. That is to say, for the age which is represented for us by Spenser and Shakespeare, the new forces stimulated the native genius and did not overwhelm it. The purpose of my second lecture will be to give to the criticism of this period the due which it does not seem to me to have received. In the next age, the great work of Dryden in criticism is, I think, that at the right moment he became conscious of the necessity of affirming the native element in literature. Dryden is more consciously English, in his plays, than were his predecessors; his essays on the drama and on the art of translation are conscious studies of the nature of the English theatre and the English language; and even his adaptation of Chaucer is an assertion of the native tradition – rather than, what it has sometimes been taken to be, an amusing and pathetic failure to appreciate the beauty of the Chaucerian language and metric.[15] Where the Elizabethan critics, for the most part, were aware of something to be borrowed or adapted from abroad, Dryden was aware of something to be preserved at home. But throughout this period, and for much longer, one assumption remained the same: the assumption as to what was the use of poetry. Any reader of Sidney's *Apology for Poetry* can see that his *misomousoi*[16] against whom he defends poetry are men of straw, that he is confident of having the sympathy of his reader with him, and that he never seriously has to ask himself the questions, what poetry is for, what it does, or whether it is desirable. Sidney's assumption is that poetry gives at once delight and instruction, and is an adornment of social life and an honour to the nation.[17]

I am very far from dissenting from these assumptions, so far as they go; my point is that for a long time they were never questioned or modified; that during that time great poetry was written, and some criticism which just because of its assumptions has permanent instruction to give. I hold indeed that in an age in which the use of poetry is something agreed upon you are more likely to get that minute and scrupulous examination of felicity and blemish, line by line, which is conspicuously absent from the criticism of our time, a criticism which seems to demand of poetry, not that it shall be well written, but that it shall be "representative of its age." I wish that we might dispose more attention to the correctness of expression, to the clarity or obscurity, to the grammatical precision or inaccuracy, to the choice of words whether just or improper, exalted or vulgar, of our verse: in short to the good or bad breeding of our poets. My point here is that a great change in the attitude towards poetry, in the expectations and demands made upon it, did come, we may say for convenience towards the end of the eighteenth century. Wordsworth and Coleridge are not merely demolishing a debased tradition, but revolting against a whole social order; and they begin to make claims for poetry which reach their highest point of exaggeration in Shelley's famous phrase, "poets are the unacknowledged legislators of mankind."[18] Earlier laudators of poetry had said the same thing, but they did not mean the same thing: Shelley (to borrow a successful phrase from Mr. Bernard Shaw) was the first, in this tradition, of Nature's M.P.'s.[19] If Wordsworth thought that he was simply occupied with reform of language, he was deceived; he was occupied with revolution of language; and his own language was as capable of artificiality, and no more capable of naturalness, than that of Pope – as Byron felt, and as Coleridge candidly pointed out.[20] The decay of religion, and the attrition of political institutions, left dubious frontiers upon which the poet encroached; and the annexations of the poet were legitimised by the critic. For a long time the poet is the priest: there are still, I believe, people who imagine that they draw religious aliment from Browning or Meredith. But the next stage is best exemplified by Matthew Arnold. Arnold was too temperate and reasonable a man to maintain exactly that religious instruction is best conveyed by poetry, and he himself had very little to convey; but he discovered a new formula: poetry is not religion, but it is a capital substitute for religion – not invalid port, which may lend itself to hypocrisy, but coffee without caffeine, and tea without tannin.[21] The doctrine of Arnold was extended, if also somewhat travestied, in the doctrine of "art for art's sake."[22] This creed might seem a reversion to the simpler faith of an earlier time, in which the poet was like a dentist, a man with a definite job. But it was really a hopeless admission of irresponsibility. The poetry of revolt and the poetry of retreat are not of the same kind.

In our time we have moved, under various impulsions, to new positions. On the one hand the study of psychology has impelled men not only to investigate the mind of the poet with a confident ease which has led to some fantastic excesses and aberrant criticism, but also to investigate the mind of the reader and the problem of "communication" – a word which perhaps begs a question.[23] On the other hand the study of history has shown us the relation of both form and content of poetry to the conditions of its time and place. The psychological and the sociological are probably the two best advertised varieties of modern criticism; but the number of ways in which the problems of criticism are approached was never before so great or so confusing. Never were there fewer settled assumptions as to what poetry is, or why it comes about, or what it is for.[24] Criticism seems to have separated into several diverse kinds.

I have not made this brief review of the progress of criticism in order to lead up to associating myself with any particular tendency of modern criticism, least of all the sociological. I suggest that we may learn a good deal about criticism and about poetry by examining the history of criticism, not merely as a catalogue of successive notions about poetry, but as a process of readjustment between poetry and the world in and for which it is produced. We can learn something about poetry simply by studying what people have thought about it at one period after another; without coming to the stultifying conclusion that there is nothing to be said but that opinion changes. Second, the study of criticism, not as a sequence of random conjectures, but as readaptation, may also help us to draw some conclusions as to what is permanent or eternal in poetry, and what is merely the expression of the spirit of an age, and by discovering what does change, and how, and why, we may become able to apprehend what does not change.

And by investigating the problems of what has seemed to one age and another to matter, by examining differences and identities, we may somewhat hope to extend our own limitations and liberate ourselves from some of our prejudices. I will quote at this point two passages which I may have occasion to quote again. The first is from Dryden's Preface to *Annus Mirabilis*:

> the first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words: the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression.[25]

The second passage is from Coleridge's *Biographia Literaria*:

> Repeated meditations led me first to suspect . . . that Fancy and Imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one

> meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degree of one and the same power. It is not, I own, easy to conceive a more opposite translation of the Greek *phantasia* than the Latin *imaginatio*; but it is equally true that in all societies there exists an instinct of growth, a certain collective, unconscious good sense, working progressively to desynonymize those words originally of the same meaning, which the conflux of dialects supplied to the more homogeneous languages, as the Greek and German. . . . Milton had a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind.[26*]

The way in which the expression of the two poets and critics is determined by their respective backgrounds is very marked. Evident also is the more developed state of mind of Coleridge: his greater awareness of philology, and his conscious determination to make certain words mean certain things. But what we have to consider is, whether what we have here is two radically opposed theories of Poetic Imagination, or whether the two may be reconciled after we have taken account of the many causes of difference which are found in the passage of time between Dryden's generation and Coleridge's.

It may appear that most of what I have said, while it may have some bearing on the appreciation and understanding of poetry, has very little to do with the writing of it. When the critics are themselves poets, it may be suspected that they have formed their critical statements with a view to justifying their poetic practice. Such criticism as the two passages quoted is hardly designed to form the style of younger poets; it is rather, at its best, an account of the poet's experience of his own poetic activity, related in terms of his own mind. The critical mind operating *in* poetry, the critical effort which goes to the writing of it, may always be in advance of the critical mind operating *upon* poetry, whether it be one's own or some one else's. I only affirm that there is a significant relation between the best poetry and the best criticism of the same period. The age of criticism is also the age of critical poetry. And when I speak of modern poetry as being extremely critical, I mean that the contemporary poet, who is not merely a composer of graceful verses, – is forced to ask himself such questions as "what is poetry for?"; not merely "what am I to say?" but rather "how and to whom am I to say it?" We have to communicate – if it is communication, for the word may beg the question – an experience which is not an experience in the ordinary sense, for it may only exist, formed out of many personal experiences ordered in some way which may be very different from the way of valuation of practical life, in the expression of it. *If* poetry is a form of "communication," yet that which is to be communicated is the poem itself, and only incidentally the experience and the thought which have gone into it. The poem's existence is somewhere between the writer and the reader; it has a reality which is not simply the reality of what the writer is trying to "express," or of his experience of writing it, or of the experience of the reader or of the writer as reader. Consequently the problem of what a poem "means" is a good deal more difficult than it at first appears. If a poem of mine entitled *Ash-Wednesday* ever goes into a second edition, I have thought of prefixing to it the lines of Byron from *Don Juan*:

> Some have accused me of a strange design
> Against the creed and morals of this land,
> And trace it in this poem, every line.
> I don't pretend that I quite understand
> My own meaning when I would be *very* fine;
> But the fact is that I have nothing planned
> Except perhaps to be a moment merry . . .[27]

There is some sound critical admonition in these lines. But a poem is not just either what the poet "planned" or what the reader conceives, nor is its "use" restricted wholly to what the author intended or to what it actually does for readers. Though the amount and the quality of the pleasure which any work of art has given since it came into existence is not irrelevant, still we never judge it by that; and we do not ask, after being greatly moved by the sight of a piece of architecture or the audition of a piece of music, "what has been my benefit or profit from seeing this temple or hearing this music?" In one sense the question implied by the phrase "the use of poetry" is nonsense. But there is another meaning to the question. Apart from the variety of ways in which poets have used their art, with greater or less success, with designs of instruction or persuasion, there is no doubt that a poet wishes to give pleasure, to entertain or divert people; and he should normally be glad to be able to feel that the entertainment or diversion is enjoyed by as large and various a number of people as possible. When a poet deliberately restricts his public by his choice of style of writing or of subject-matter, this is a special situation demanding explanation and extenuation, but I doubt whether this ever happens. It is one thing to write in a style which is already popular, and another to hope that one's writing may eventually become popular. From one point of view, the poet aspires to the condition of the music-hall comedian.[28] Being incapable of altering his wares to suit a prevailing taste, if there be any, he naturally desires a state of society in which they may become popular, and in which his own talents will be put to the best use. He is accordingly vitally interested in the *use* of poetry. The subsequent lectures will treat of the varying conceptions of the use of poetry during the last three centuries, as illustrated in criticism, and especially in the criticism provided by the poets themselves.

NOTE TO CHAPTER I

ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF TASTE IN POETRY

It may be not inopportune, in connexion with some of the questions touched upon in the foregoing chapter, to summarise here certain remarks which I made elsewhere upon the Development of Taste.[29] They are, I hope, not without some bearing upon the teaching of literature in schools and colleges.

I may be generalising my own history unwarrantably, or on the other hand I may be uttering what is already a commonplace amongst teachers and psychologists, when I put forward the conjecture that the majority of children, up to say twelve or fourteen, are capable of a certain enjoyment of poetry; that at or about puberty the majority of these find little further use for it, but that a small minority then find themselves possessed of a craving for poetry which is wholly different from any enjoyment experienced before. I do not know whether little girls have a different taste in poetry from little boys, but the responses of the latter I believe to be fairly uniform. "Horatius," "The Burial of Sir John Moore," "Bannockburn," Tennyson's "Revenge," some of the border ballads: a liking for martial and sanguinary poetry is no more to be discouraged than engagements with lead soldiers and pea-shooters.[30] The only pleasure that I got from Shakespeare was the pleasure of being commended for reading him; had I been a child of more independent mind I should have refused to read him at all.[31] Recognising the frequent deceptions of memory, I seem to remember that my early liking for the sort of verse that small boys do like vanished at about the age of twelve, leaving me for a couple of years with no sort of interest in poetry at all. I can recall clearly enough the moment when, at the age of fourteen or so, I happened to pick up a copy of FitzGerald's *Omar* which was lying about, and the almost overwhelming introduction to a new world of feeling which this poem was the occasion of giving me.[32] It was like a sudden conversion; the world appeared anew, painted with bright, delicious and painful colours. Thereupon I took the usual adolescent course with Byron, Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Swinburne.

I take this period to have persisted until my nineteenth or twentieth year. Being a period of rapid assimilation, the end may not know the beginning, so different may the taste become. Like the first period of childhood, it is one beyond which I dare say many people never advance; so that such taste for poetry as they retain in later life is only a sentimental memory of the pleasures of youth, and is probably entwined with all our other sentimental retrospective feelings. It is, no doubt, a period of keen enjoyment; but we must not confuse the intensity of the poetic experience in adolescence with the intense experience of poetry. At this period, the poem, or the poetry of a single poet, invades the youthful consciousness and assumes complete possession for a time. We do not really see it as something with an existence outside ourselves; much as in our youthful experiences of love, we do not so much see the person as infer the existence of some outside object which sets in motion these new and delightful feelings in which we are absorbed. The frequent result is an outburst of scribbling which we may call imitation, so long as we are aware of the meaning of the word "imitation" which we employ. It is not deliberate choice of a poet to mimic, but writing under a kind of daemonic possession by one poet.

The third, or mature stage of enjoyment of poetry, comes when we cease to identify ourselves with the poet we happen to be reading; when our critical faculties remain awake; when we are aware of what one poet can be expected to give and what he cannot. The poem has its own existence, apart from us; it was there before us and will endure after us. It is only at this stage that the reader is prepared to distinguish between degrees of greatness in poetry; before that stage he can only be expected to distinguish between the genuine and the sham – the capacity to make this latter distinction must always be practised first. The poets we frequent in adolescence will not be arranged in any objective order of eminence, but by the personal accidents which put them into relation with us; and this is right. I doubt whether it is possible to explain to school children or even undergraduates the differences of degree among poets, and I doubt whether it is wise to try; they have not yet had enough experience of life for these matters to have much meaning. The perception of *why* Shakespeare, or Dante, or Sophocles holds the place he has is something which comes only very slowly in the course of living. And the deliberate attempt to grapple with poetry which is not naturally congenial, and some of which never will be, should be a very mature activity indeed; an activity which well repays the effort, but which cannot be recommended to young people without grave danger of deadening their sensibility to poetry and confounding the genuine *development* of taste with the sham acquisition of it.

It should be clear that the "development of *taste*" is an abstraction. To set before oneself the goal of being able to enjoy, and in the proper objective order of merit, all good poetry, is to pursue a phantom, the chase after which should be left to those whose ambition it is to be "cultivated" or "cultured," for whom art is a luxury article and its appreciation an accomplishment. For the development of genuine taste, founded on genuine feeling, is inextricable from the development of the personality and character.[33*] Genuine taste is always imperfect taste – but we are all, as a matter of fact, imperfect people; and the man whose taste in poetry does not bear the stamp of his particular personality, so that there are differences in what he likes from what we like, as well as resemblances, and differences in the way of liking the same things, is apt to be a very uninteresting person with whom to discuss poetry. We may even say that to have better "taste" in poetry than belongs to one's state of development, is not to "taste" anything at all. One's taste in poetry cannot be isolated from one's other interests and passions; it affects them and is affected by them, and must be limited as one's self is limited.

This note is really introductory to a large and difficult question: whether the attempt to teach students to *appreciate* English literature should be made at all; and with what restrictions the teaching of English literature can rightly be included in any academic curriculum, if at all.

NOTES

1. On 28 Oct, this lecture was advertised at Harvard as "The Relation of Criticism and Poetry."

2. Letter to Edward Lee-Childe, *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, vol 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 64-65.

3. Although raised in the Unitarian Church, Charles Eliot Norton abandoned religious faith for civic liberalism.

4*. TSE's note: "My quotations from Norton's letters are taken from the *Life and Letters of Charles Eliot Norton* (Houghton, Mifflin: 2 vols.)." Letter to Chauncey Wright, 5 Dec 1869, *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, vol 1, 371-72.

5. TSE refers to Aristotle's examination of Greek drama in the *Poetics*; to Coleridge's defense of Wordsworth's poetry and poetic theory in *Biographia Literaria* (1817); and to Wordsworth's 1800 Preface to the *Lyrical Ballads*.

6. *Science and Poetry* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1926),9.

7. In "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930), TSE articulates his objections to Richards's theory of value (4.20).

8. *Science and Poetry*, 25.

9. In "Tradition and the Individual Talent," TSE asserts "The existing monuments form an ideal order among themselves, which is modified by the introduction of the new (the really new) work of art among them. The existing order is complete before the new work arrives; for order to persist after the supervention of novelty, the *whole* existing order must be, if ever so slightly, altered; and so the relations, proportions, values of each work of art toward the whole are readjusted; and this is conformity between the old and the new" (2.106).

10. Again, TSE echoes "Tradition and the Individual Talent": "we might remind ourselves that criticism is as inevitable as breathing, and that we should be none the worse for articulating what passes in our minds when we read a book and feel an emotion about it, for criticizing our own minds in their work of criticism" (2.105).

11. Alexandrian (OED): "Of or relating to the Alexandrian school of Greek literature . . . characteristic of this, esp. in being derivative, artificial, or recondite." In "Prose and Verse" (1921), TSE argued that "The real decadence in literature occurs when both verse and prose cease their effort: Alexandrianism, or more truly Georgianism, is present when verse becomes a language, a set of feelings, a style quite remote from life, and when prose becomes a mere practical vehicle" (2.330). In his review of *The Waste Land* for the *New Statesman* of 3 Nov 1923, Cambridge classicist F. L. Lucas likened TSE's display of erudition in the poem and its notes to the decadence of the Greek verse of Alexandria.

12. "The Forms of English Poetry," *Form and Style in English Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1928), 105-06. In "Mystic and Politician as Poet" (1930), TSE remarks that Ker "probably knew the whole of European poetry better than any man of his time" (4.98). Browning's long narrative poem *Sordello* (1840) was received with incomprehension on its publication, although it was admired by later poets, including Ezra Pound, who first read it in 1904.

13. In "Dryden the Poet" (1931), TSE comments: "Shakespearean blank verse was soon to expire with the set phrases of Shirley" (4.267).

14. See TSE's "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (1927) for his description of the ways in which the plays of Seneca exerted their influence on Elizabethan drama, including the two Roman tragedies of Ben Jonson, which constituted "an attempt, by an active practising playwright, to improve the form of popular drama by the example of Seneca; not by slavish imitation but by adaptation, to make of popular drama a finished work of art" (3.204).

15. Dryden modernized three of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (the Knight's Tale, the Nun's Priest Tale, and the Wife of Bath's Tale), a section from the Prologue (called "The Character of a Good Parson"), and the medieval poem *The Flower and the Leaf*, which he thought was by Chaucer, in *Fables, Ancient and Modern; Translated into Verse, from Homer, Ovid, Boccace, & Chaucer; with Original Poems* (1700). In a letter of 23 Sept 1931, TSE wrote to W. H. Auden: "Poor Dryden has been so abused for bringing Chaucer up to date" (*L5* 666).

16. *misomousoi*: poet-haters; literally "those who hate the muses"

17. Sidney writes: "it is that feigning notable images of virtues, vices, or what else, with that delightful teaching, which must be the right describing note to know a poet by." "An Apology for Poetry" (1595) in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, vol 1 (London: Oxford UP, 1904), 160.

18. *Read*: "Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world." "A Defence of Poetry" (1821) in *The Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. R. H. Shepard, vol 2 (London: Chatto & Windus, 1888), 42.

19. TSE takes the phrase from Shaw's play *The Admirable Bashville* (1901), from prizefighter Cashel Byron's reply to Lydia, who would have him become instead one of "Nature's gentlemen" (II.i): "That's the collection for the loser, Lydia. / I am not wont to need it. When your friends / Contest elections, and at foot o' th' poll / Rue their presumption, 'tis their wont to claim / A moral victory. In a sort they are / Nature's M.P.s. I am not yet so threadbare / As to select these consolation stakes."

20. In chapter 17 of *Biographia Literaria*, Coleridge sets forth his differences from Wordsworth's proposed reformation of poetic diction.

21. invalid port: i.e. port wine intended as a tonic for invalids. In 1933, TSE's friend E. McKnight Kauffer created an advertising poster for Gilbey's Invalid Port.

22. In "Arnold and Pater" (1930), TSE asserts: "'Art for art's sake' is the offspring of Arnold's Culture; and we can hardly venture to say that it is even a perversion of Arnold's doctrine, considering how very vague and ambiguous that doctrine is" (4.182).

23. In *The Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1926), Richards asserts: "The two pillars upon which a theory of criticism must rest are an account of value and an account of communication" (20).

24. TSE echoes F. L. Lucas's 1933 British Academy Warton Lecture: "Is there a single law of literature, a single principle for writing poetry, a single canon of criticizing it, about which a congress of our critics would agree?" *The Criticism of Poetry* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1933), 6-7. This passage is followed by sharp criticism of TSE's valuation of *Hamlet*.

25. *Dryden's Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (London: Dent, 1912), 192.

26*. TSE's note: "I may remark here as well as anywhere else that the statement contained in this last sentence is liable to operate an irrational persuasion upon the mind of the reader. We agree that Milton is a much greater poet than Cowley, and of another and superior kind. We then concede without examination that the difference may be formulated by this neat antithesis, and accept without examination the distinction between imagination and fancy which Coleridge has done no more than impose. The antithesis of highly against very is also an element of persuasion. See p. 58." *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. J. Shawcross (London: Oxford UP, 1907), vol 1, 202.

27. Last line reads: "Unless it were to be a moment merry." Canto 4, stanza 5, *Don Juan* in *The Works of Lord Byron*, ed. Thomas Moore, vol 16 (London: John Murray, 1833), 7. TSE misquotes this stanza in a letter to Conrad Aiken of 21 Nov 1914 (*L1* 75), and again, as above, in his final Turnbull lecture of 3 Feb 1933. TSE corrected the misquotation in Sept when reading the proof for the US edition of *UPUC*.

28. TSE adapts Pater's remark in the "School of Giorgione" chapter of *The Renaissance* that "*All art constantly aspires towards the condition of music.*" *The Renaissance: Studies in Art and Poetry* (London: Macmillan, 1893), 105. In his 1922 obituary article on the music hall artist, Marie Lloyd, TSE asserts: "popularity in her case was not merely evidence of her accomplishment; it was something more than success. It is evidence of the extent to which she represented and expressed that part of the English nation which has perhaps the greatest vitality and interest" (2.418).

29. On 6 Jan 1933, at the University of California, Los Angeles, and again on 11 Jan at the University of California, Berkeley, TSE delivered a lecture entitled "The Development of Taste in Poetry" (4.834).

30. "Horatius at the Bridge," from Thomas Babington Macaulay's *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842), narrates Horatius's heroic defense of Sublician Bridge in ancient Rome; "The Burial of Sir John Moore after Corunna" (1817), by Rev. Charles Wolfe, recounts the funeral of the British General after the Battle of Corunna during the Napoleonic Wars; "Bannockburn" ("Scots Wha Hae") (1793), by Robert Burns, celebrates the Scottish victory against the English at Bannockburn in 1314; Tennyson's "The 'Revenge': A Ballad of the Fleet" (1878) dramatically narrates the action of the English galleon, *Revenge*, in 1591, heavily outnumbered by the Spanish fleet.

31. On 4 Apr 1905, Charlotte Eliot boasted to Richard Cobb, headmaster of Milton Academy: "[TSE] has read practically all of Shakespeare, whom he admires, and retains much in memory" (*L1* 4).

32. Edward FitzGerald, *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* (1859-79↱), a free translation of the *rubais* or quatrains attributed to the twelfth-century Persian poet Omar Khayyám. TSE included *The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám* in a tutorial class on Fitzgerald in his 1916 Extension lectures on Modern English Literature (1.480). In "The Art of Poetry," an interview in the *Paris Review*, 21 (Spr / Sum 1959), TSE recalled: "I began I think about the age of fourteen, under the inspiration of Fitzgerald's *Omar Khayyam*, to write a number of very gloomy and atheistical and despairing quatrains in the same style, which fortunately I suppressed completely – so completely that they don't exist" (49).

33*. TSE's note: "In making this statement I refuse to be drawn into any discussion of the definitions of 'personality' and 'character.'" TSE quotes Herbert Read's distinction between "character" and "personality" from *Form in Modern Poetry* (1932) in the appendix of *ASG* (67).

Lecture II

Apology for the Countess of Pembroke

November 25th, 1932[1]

The literary criticism of the Elizabethan period is not very great in bulk;[2†] to the account which George Saintsbury has given there cannot in its kind be very much to add, and from his critical valuation there is not much to detract.[3] What concerns[4†] me here is the general opinion of it which students are likely to form, in relation to the poetry of the age, on account of two "lost causes" which that criticism championed. The censure of the popular drama, and the attempt to introduce a more severe classical form illustrated by the essay of Sir Philip Sidney, and the censure of rhymed verse, and the attempt to introduce some adaptation of classical forms illustrated by the essay of Campion, might be taken, and have been taken, as striking examples of the futility of corrective criticism, and of the superiority of irreflective inspiration over calculation.[5†] If I can show that no such clear contrast is possible, and that the relation of the critical to the creative mind was not one of simple[6†] antagonism in the Elizabethan age, it will be easier for me to demonstrate[7†] the intimacy of the creative and the critical mind at a later period.

Everyone has read Campion's "Observations in the Art of English Poesie" and Daniel's "Defence of Ryme."[8] Campion, who except for Shakespeare was the most accomplished master of rhymed lyric of his time,[9†] was certainly in a weak position for attacking rhyme, as Daniel in his reply was not slow to observe.[10] His treatise is known to most people merely as the repository of two very beautiful pieces, "Rose-cheeked Laura come" and "Raving war begot,"[11] and of a number of other exercises most of which by their inferiority bear witness[12†] against him. Experimentation with semi-classical metres[13†] is less derided to-day than it was before the time[14†] of Robert Bridges.[15] I do not believe that good English verse can be written quite in the way which Campion advocates, for it is the natural genius of the language,[16†] and not ancient authority, that must decide;[17†] better scholars than I, have suspected even that Latin versification was too much influenced by Greek models; I do not even believe that the metric of *The Testament of Beauty* is successful, and I have always preferred Dr. Bridges' earlier and more conventional verse to his later experiments.[18] Ezra Pound's "Seafarer," on the other hand, is a magnificent paraphrase exploiting the resources of a parent language; I discern its beneficent influence upon the work of some of the more interesting[19†] younger poets to-day.[20] Some of the older forms of English versification[21†] are being revived to good purpose. But the point to dwell upon is not that Campion was altogether wrong, for he was not; or that he was completely downed by Daniel's rejoinder;[22†] and we must remember that in other matters Daniel was[23†] a member of the classicising school. The result of the controversy between Campion and Daniel is to establish, both that the Latin metres cannot be copied in English,[24†] and that rhyme is neither an essential nor a superfluity. Furthermore, no prosodic system ever invented can teach anyone to write good English verse. It is, as Mr. Pound has so often remarked, the musical phrase that matters.[25*] The great achievement of Elizabethan versification is the development of blank verse; it is the dramatic poets; and eventually Milton,[26†] who are Spenser's true heirs. Just as Pope, who used what is nominally[27†] the same form as Dryden's couplet, bears little resemblance to Dryden,[28†] and as the writer to-day who was genuinely influenced by Pope would hardly want to use that couplet at all, so the writers who were significantly[29†] influenced by Spenser are not those who have attempted to use his stanza, which is inimitable. The second greatest accomplishment of the age was the lyric; and the lyric of Shakespeare and Campion owes its beauty not primarily to its use of rhyme or to its perfection of a "verse form," but to the fact that it is written to musical form; it is written to be sung.[30] Shakespeare's knowledge of music is hardly likely to have been comparable to Campion's; but in that age a writer could hardly escape knowing a little.[31†] I can hardly conceive such a song as "Come away death" being written except in collaboration with the musician.[32*] But, to return to Campion and Daniel, I consider the controversy important, not because either was quite right or wrong, but because it is a part of the struggle between native and foreign elements as the result of which our greatest poetry[33†] was created. Campion pushed to an extreme a theory which he did not himself often practise; but the fact that people could then think along such lines is significant.[34†]

The essay of Sidney in which occur the passages ridiculing the contemporary stage, so frequently quoted, may have been composed as early as 1580; at any rate, was composed before the great plays of the age were written.[35] We can hardly suppose that the writer who in passing showed not only a lively appreciation of[36†] *Chevy Chase*, but also of Chaucer, singling for mention what is Chaucer's greatest poem – *Troilus* – would have been imperceptive of the excellence of Shakespeare.[37] But when we think of the multitude of bad plays, and the number of precious but imperfect plays, which Sidney did not live to read or see performed, we cannot deny that his lamentations have some application to the whole period. We are apt, in thinking of the age of Shakespeare, to imagine something like a fertile field in which tares and fine wheat luxuriated, in which the former could not have been eradicated without risk to the latter.[38] Let both grow together until the harvest. I am not inclined to deny the exceptional number of writers of real poetic and dramatic genius[39†]; but I cannot help regretting that some of their best plays are no better than they are. "So falleth it out," says Sidney, "that having indeed no right Comedy, in that comical part of our Tragedy we have nothing but scurrility, unworthy of any chaste ears, or some extreme show of doltishness, indeed fit to lift up a loud laughter, and nothing else" [199]. He is perfectly right. *The Changeling* is only a solitary example in its extreme contrast between the grandeur of the main plot and the nauseousness of the secondary plot from which it has its title.[40] The plays of Marston and Heywood – the latter a writer of some theatrical ability, the former considerably more – are similarly disfigured.[41] In *The Witch of Edmonton* we have the odd spectacle of a play containing comic and tragic elements, each pretty certainly contributed by a different writer, each rising at moments to great heights in its own kind, but very imperfectly welded; I find the readjustments of mood required in this play very trying.[42] Now the desire for "comic relief" on the part of an audience is, I believe, a permanent craving of human nature; but that does not mean that it is a craving that ought to be gratified.[43] It springs from a lack of the capacity for concentration. Farce and love-romances, especially if seasoned with scabrousness,[44†] are the two forms of entertainment upon which the human mind can most easily, lovingly and for the longest time maintain its attention; but we like some farce as a relief from our sentiment, however salacious, and some sentiment as a relief from our farce, however broad. The audience which can keep its attention fixed upon *pure* tragedy or *pure* comedy is much more highly developed.[45†] The Athenian stage got relief through the chorus; and perhaps some of its tragedy may have held attention largely by its sensationalism. To my mind, Racine's *Bérénice* represents about the summit of civilisation in tragedy; and it is, in a way, a Christian tragedy, with devotion to the State substituted for devotion to divine law.[46]

The dramatic poet who can engross the reader's or the auditor's attention during the space of a *Bérénice* is the most civilised dramatist – though not necessarily the greatest, for there are other qualities to consider.

My point is this: that the Elizabethan drama did tend to approach that *unity of feeling* which Sidney desires.[47] From the tragedy or history in which the comic element was simply left blank to be supplied by some clown favoured by the pit (as some of the farce in *Faustus* is supposed to be an abbreviation of the gags of one comedian), the drama grew to maturity, in, for example, *Coriolanus*, *Volpone*, and in a later generation *The Way of the World*.[48] And it did this, not because docile dramatists obeyed the wishes of Sidney, but because the improvements advocated by Sidney happened to be those which a maturing civilisation would make for itself. The doctrine of *Unity of Sentiment*, in fact, happens to be right. And I think, in passing, that simply because we have been inclined to accept the "comic relief" notion as a kind of fixed law of Elizabethan drama, we have sometimes misunderstood the intention of the dramatist: as, for instance, in treating *The Jew of Malta* as a huffe-snuffe grand tragedy disfigured by clownish irrelevancies of doubtful taste, we have missed its point.[49]

Some objectors may bring forward Shakespeare either as a triumphant exception to this theory or as a triumphant refutation of it. I know well how difficult it is to fit Shakespeare into any theory, especially if it be a theory about Shakespeare; and I cannot here undertake a complete justification, or enter upon all the qualifications that the theory requires. But we start with "comic relief" as a practical necessity of the time for the writer who had to make his living by writing plays.[50†] What is really interesting is what Shakespeare made of this necessity. I think that when we turn to *Henry IV* we often feel that what we want to re-read and linger over are the Falstaff episodes, rather than the political highfalutin of the King's party and its adversaries. That is an error. As we read from Part I to Part II and see Falstaff, not merely gluttonising and playing pranks indifferent to affairs of State, but leading his band of conscripts and conversing with local magnates, we find that the relief has become serious contrast, and that political satire issues from it. In *Henry V* the two elements are still more fused; so that we have not merely a chronicle of kings and queens, but a universal comedy[51†] in which all the actors take part in one event. But it is not in the histories, plays of a transient and unsatisfactory type, that we find the comic relief most nearly taken up into a higher unity of feeling. In

Twelfth Night and *A Midsummer Night's Dream*[52†] the farcical element is an essential to a pattern more complex and elaborate than any constructed by a dramatist before or since. The Knocking on the Gate in *Macbeth* has been cited too often for me to call attention to it; less hackneyed is the scene upon Pompey's galley in *Antony and Cleopatra*. This scene is not only in itself a prodigious piece of political satire[53†] –

> A beares the third part of the world, man . . .[54]

but is a key to everything[55†] that precedes and follows. To demonstrate this point to your satisfaction would, I know, require a whole essay to itself. Here, I can only affirm that for me the violence of contrast between the tragic and the comic, the sublime and the bathetic, in the plays of Shakespeare, disappears in his maturing work; I only hope that a comparison of *The Merchant of Venice*, *Hamlet* and *The Tempest* will lead others to the same conclusion. I was once[56†] under censure for suggesting that in *Hamlet* Shakespeare was dealing with "intractable material": my words were even interpreted as maintaining[57†] that *Coriolanus* is a greater play than *Hamlet*.[58] I am not very much interested in deciding which play of Shakespeare is greater than which other; because I am more and more interested, not in one play or another, but in Shakespeare's work as a whole.[59] I do not think it any derogation to suggest that Shakespeare did not always succeed: such a suggestion would imply a very narrow view of success. His success must always be reckoned in understanding of what he attempted; and I believe that to admit his partial failures is to *approach* the recognition of his real greatness more closely than to hold that he was always granted plenary inspiration. I do not pretend that I think *Measure for Measure*, or *Troilus and Cressida*, or *All's Well That Ends Well*, to be a wholly "successful" play; but if any one of Shakespeare's plays were omitted we should not be able to understand the rest as well as we do.[60†] In such plays, we must consider not only the degree of unification of all the elements into a "unity of sentiment," but the quality and kind of the emotions to be unified, and the elaborateness of the pattern of unification.

This consideration may appear to have carried us far away from Sidney's simple assertion about the decorum to be observed in excluding extraneous matter; but we are really with him all the time. So much, for the present, for the Unity of Sentiment. But Sidney is orthodox in laws[61†] still more difficult to observe; for he says roundly, "the stage should always represent but one place, and the uttermost time presupposed in it should be, both by Aristotle's precept and common reason, but one day" [197]. This unity of place and time is a stumbling-block so old that we think it long since worn away: a law, like some others, so universally violated, that, like the heroine of Hood,

We thought it dying when it slept
And sleeping when it died.[62]

But my point is simply that the unities differ radically from human legislation in that they are laws of nature, and a law of nature, even when it is a law of human nature, is quite another thing from a human law. The kind of literary law in which Aristotle was interested was not law that he laid down, but law that he discovered. The laws (*not* rules) of unity of place and time remain valid in that every play which observes them *in so far as its material allows* is in that respect and degree superior to plays which observe them less. I believe that in every play[63†] in which they are not observed we only put up with their violation because we feel that something is gained which we could not have if the law *were* observed. This is not to establish another law. There *is* no other law possible. It is merely to recognise that in poetry as in life our business is to make the best of a bad job.[64†] Furthermore, we must observe that the Unities are not three separate laws.[65†] They are three aspects of one law: we may violate the law of Unity of Place more flagrantly if we preserve the law of Unity of Time, or vice versa; we may violate both if we observe more closely the law of Unity of Sentiment.

We start, most of us, with an unconscious prejudice against the Unities – I mean, we are unconscious of the large element in our feeling which is mere ignorance and mere prejudice. I mean that English-speaking peoples have immediate and intimate experience of great plays in which the Unities are grossly[66†] violated, and perhaps of inferior plays in which they are more nearly observed. Furthermore, we have a natural, inevitable and largely justifiable sympathy with the literature of our own country and language; and we have had the Unities so rubbed into us, when we studied Greek or French drama, that we may think it is because of the unfamiliar dramatic form that we do not care for them so much as we care for Shakespeare. But it is just as likely that we do not care for them because they represent the genius of an alien people and a foreign tongue, and hence are prejudiced against the dramatic form. I believe[67†] that those plays of Shakespeare which approximate more nearly to observation of the Unities are *in that* *respect* better plays; I would even go so far as to say that the King of Denmark, in sending Hamlet to England, was attempting to violate the Unity of Action: a crime far worse, for a man in his position, than attempted murder.[68] And what I have denominated Unity of Sentiment is only a slightly larger term than[69†] Unity of Action.[70†]

Unity, says Butcher, in his edition of the *Poetics*, is manifested mainly in two ways:

> First, in the causal connexion that binds together the several parts of a play – the thoughts, the emotions, the decisions of the will, the external events being inextricably interwoven. Secondly, in the fact that the whole series of events, with all the moral forces that are brought into collision, are directed to a single end. The action as it advances converges on a definite point. The thread of purpose running through it becomes more marked. All minor effects are subordinated to the sense of an ever-growing unity. The end is linked to the beginning with inevitable certainty, and in the end we discern the meaning of the whole.[71]

It should be obvious that the observance of this Unity must lead us, given certain dramatic material otherwise highly valuable, inevitably to violation of the Unities of Place and Time.[72*] As for Time, Aristotle only remarks rather casually that the usual practice of tragedy was to confine itself, so far as possible, to the action of twenty-four hours. The only modern author[73†] who has succeeded in observing this Unity exactly[74†] is Mr. James Joyce; and he has done so with only slight deviation from the Unity of Place, as the action all takes place in or near the town of Dublin, and Dublin is a contributing cause of the unity of the whole book.[75] But Sir Philip Sidney, with the weight of Italian criticism upon his back,[76†] and probably not having read Aristotle so deeply as he had read Latin authors and Italian critics widely, only went a little too far: he was right in principle, and he was justified in his strictures upon the drama of his day.[77†] A greater critic than Sidney, the greatest critic of his time, Ben Jonson, says wisely:

> I know nothing can conduce more to letters, than to examine the writings of the Ancients, and not to rest in their sole authority, or take all upon trust from them; provided the plagues of judging, and pronouncing against them, be away; such as [are] envy, bitterness, precipitation, impudence, and scurrile scoffing. For to all the observations of the

> Ancients, we have our own experience; which, if we will use and apply, we have better means to pronounce. It is true they opened the gates, and made the way that went before us; but as guides, not commanders.[78]

And further:

> Let Aristotle and others have their dues; but if we can make farther discoveries of truth and fitness than they, why are we envied? [66]

It was natural that a member of the Countess of Pembroke's circle, writing while popular literature was still mostly barbarous, should be more fearful and intolerant than Ben Jonson, writing towards the end of his days, with a rich creative past in retrospect, and reviewing his own great work.[79] I do not pretend that Sidney's criticism made any more impression upon the form which later poetic drama took than did, say, the example of Greville, Daniel or Alexander.[80] The chief channel through which the Countess of Pembroke's circle may have affected the course of English poetry is the great civilising influence of Spenser. Spenser exercised great influence upon Marlowe; Marlowe first showed what could be done with dramatic blank verse, and Marlowe's great disciple Milton showed what could be done with blank verse in a long poem. So great the influence of Spenser seems to me, that I should say that without it we might not have had the finest developments of blank verse.[81] Such a derivation in itself should be enough to rescue the Countess of Pembroke's friends and relatives from obscurity, enough to dignify their critical efforts, to raise them from the ignominy of wealthy well-born amateurs of the arts, or obscurantist supporters of a fastidious and sterile classicism.

So much for the two real problems of specific interest which occupied the attention of Elizabethan critics: the problem of dramatic form and the problem of verse technique. Of the fashion set by Sidney, the panegyric of poetry and the poet, I shall have more to say when I come to contrast it with the laudation of the Poet by Shelley, and with, so to speak, his ordination by Matthew Arnold.[82†] Puttenham and Webbe play chorus to Sidney.[83] Poetry, we are repeatedly told, is "making," and we are reminded that ποιεῖν[84] means to make. Lip-service is paid to the Aristotelian "imitation," but none of the writers of the period seems to have penetrated very deeply into the notion of mimesis.[85] The opinions of Plato and Aristotle are garbled like a judicious advertisement selection from a book-review. Webbe would have us believe that Plato and Aristotle join in supposing "all wisdom and knowledge to be included mystically in that divine instinction wherewith they thought their *vates* to be inspired."[86] The notion of divine inspiration is made the most of. The poet expresses both divine and worldly truth, and exerts moral influence – here "imitation" is brought in again. Finally, the poet gives delight, and in effect helps materially to maintain and to raise the level of culture; no court is glorious without him, and no people great which has no poets. Interspersed in the discourses of Sidney, Puttenham and Webbe are some acute observations; and Puttenham's prefatory note on Speech is most interesting.[87] I am not concerned with these, or with the circumstances in which these essays were brought forth; though I may be allowed to offer a word of thanks, in passing, to Gosson because his *School of Abuse* provoked them.[88] It is, however, worthy of remembrance that these critical treatises appeared just *before* the beginning of the great age; so that if they are a sign of anything, it is of growth and not of decay.

And in these simple effusions we have in embryo the critical questions which were to be discussed much later. To talk of poets as makers and as inspired does not get us very far, and this notion of inspiration need not be pressed for literalness; but it shows some perception of the question: "how does the making of poetry come about?" To talk vaguely of poets as philosophers does not get us very far either, but it is the simplest reply to the question: "what is the content of poetry?"[89] Similarly with the account of poetry in its high moral purpose, the question of the relation of art and ethics appears; and finally, in the simple assertions that poetry gives high delight and adorns society is some awareness of the problem of the relation of the poem to the reader and the place of poetry in society. Once you have started you cannot stop. And these people started before Shakespeare.

I shall have spoken to no purpose if I have given the impression that I wish simply to affirm the importance of a neglected, or rather belittled group of literary people whose taste is supposed to have been counter to that of the age. Had that been my intention I should have adopted a different scheme of treatment, dealt with them severally, and in particular have had something to say about the special importance of John Lyly in the development of English prose and of proper comedy.[90] My purpose has been rather to determine[91†] the relation of the critical currents to the general stream of creative activity. In that form of historical survey which is not concerned with the total movement of literature, but with – on the lowest level – mere readability, and which aims to tell us what works we can still enjoy, which emphasises those books which men have found it worth their while to continue to read and which are valuable to us irrespective of their historical position, some of these writers are properly[92†] ignored. The works of Sir Philip Sidney, excepting a few sonnets, are not among those to which one can return for perpetual refreshment; the *Arcadia*[93†] is a monument of dulness.[94] But I have wished to affirm that in looking at the period with an interest in the development of the critical consciousness in and towards poetry, you cannot dissociate one group of people from another; you cannot draw a line and say here is backwater, here is the main stream. In the drama, we seem to have on the one hand almost the whole body of men of letters, a crowd of scholars coming down from Oxford and Cambridge to pick a poor living in London, needy and often almost desperate men of talent; and on the other an alert, curious, semi-barbarous public, fond of beer and bawdry,[95†] including much the same sort of people whom one encounters in the local outlying theatres to-day,[96†] craving cheap amusement to thrill their emotions, arouse their mirth and satisfy their curiosity; and between the entertainers and the entertained a fundamental homogeneity of race, of sense of humour and sense of right and wrong.[97†] The worst fault that poetry can commit is to be dull; and the Elizabethan dramatists were more or less frequently saved from dulness or galvanised into animation by the necessity to amuse. Their livelihood depended upon it: they had to amuse or starve.[98†]

NOTES

1. This lecture was advertised on 28 Oct as “Poetry and Criticism in the Time of Elizabeth.” At a dinner in honor of TSE on 15 Nov, Theodore Morrison, editor of the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, approached TSE for a contribution and proposed publishing one of the Norton lectures. On 18 Nov, TSE consulted Professor Lowes, acting chairman of the Norton committee, about this request. “Apology for the Countess of Pembroke” appeared in the *Harvard Graduates' Magazine*, 41 (Dec 1932), 63-75. Although it retained this title when reprinted in *UPUC*, the text of the lecture was significantly revised by TSE during the summer of 1933. Substantive alterations from the original publication (hereafter *HGM*) are indicated in the notes.

The version published in *HGM* opens with the following paragraph:

“‘The story of literature,’ I have just read in a publisher's circular, ‘has pretty generally been handed out to an unwilling world swathed in the red flannels of academic hocus-pocus. But a great many bright people – like you and me – have suspected all along, and in direct opposition to tradition, that *Beowulf* is a dreadful composition, for instance, that Milton is dull, that Dante is a prig.’ These words are not by Charles Eliot Norton. He wrote in 1907, however, near the end of his life: ‘It is a great pity that so many of our American scholars, old and young, have preferred the methods which lead only to the acquisition of facts often of no importance, to those which lead to the nobler cultivation of the intelligence and of the taste, and to the appreciation of the true ends of the study of language and of literature.' Having just enough scholarship not to be a bright person, and not having enough to run any risk of the second error, I can endeavour humbly to follow a *via media*. My condition, which is unlike that of the accumulator of facts, is more likely to be that of the grasshopper at the end of Lafontaine's fable – a species of insect associated by the early Greeks with lively music and poetry, rather than with learning and regiment."

The publisher's circular is untraced. Norton's letter to James Loeb of 11 May 1907 appears in vol 2 of *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin), 376. In La Fontaine's "La Cigale et la Fourmi" (The Grasshopper and the Ant) (1668), the grasshopper, which has spent the summer singing and is now starving in winter, begs the ant for food but is rebuked for his idleness. TSE refers to the Greek poems called Anacreontic, in which the grasshopper is praised for his song.

2†. in *HGM*: "and is not wholly outside of the scope of my scholarship and philosophy."

3. TSE refers to Saintsbury's chapter on "Elizabethan Criticism" in *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe*, vol 2 (1902), 143-209. In "Beyle and Balzac" (1919), TSE writes: "Mr. Saintsbury is a master of the literary history – a form of writing which demands qualifications of its own" (2.48). TSE possessed an annotated copy of the 1908 second edition of J. E. Spingarn's groundbreaking *A History of Literary Criticism in the Renaissance* (1899). On 3 May 1924, TSE informed Spingarn that: "I have known and admired your book on the Renaissance for many years" (*L2* 400).

4†. in *HGM*: "chiefly concerns"

5†. in *HGM*: "reasoning and calculation"

6†. in *HGM*: "direct"

7†. in *HGM*: "prove"

8. Samuel Daniel's "A Defence of Ryme" in his *Panegyrike to the King* (1603) was a refutation of Campion's arguments in "Observations in the Art of English Poesie" (1602). In "Dryden the Critic" (1931), TSE remarks: "There had been criticism in the previous age; but the only one I know, which has any precise and permanent value, is the admirable short treatise of Campion on metre and quantity – unless one except the reply to it by Daniel, and the graceful but ineffectual skirmishing of Philip Sidney" (4.288). In "A Romantic Aristocrat" (1919), TSE states that a study by George Wyndham "overrates Sidney, and in his references to Elizabethan writings on the theory of poetry omits mention of the essay by Campion, an abler and more daring though less common-sense study than Daniel's" (2.29).

9†. in *HGM*: "who wrote the most lovely rhymed lyrics of any poet of his time except Shakespeare"

10. Daniel does not refer to Campion by name but describes a detractor "whose commendable Rymes, albeit now himselfe an enemy to ryme, have given heretofore to the world the best notice of his worth." "A Defence of Rhyme" in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, ed. G. Gregory Smith, vol 2 (London: Oxford UP, 1904), 358.

11. "Rose-cheeked Laura" and "Raving war begot" are among the examples of metrical forms in *Observations in the Art of English Poesie*, in which Campion applies the principles of Latin quantitative verse to English poetry.

12†. in *HGM*: "evidence"

13†. in *HGM*: "unrhymed verse"

14†. in *HGM*: "consulship"

15. The following sentences were cut from *HGM*: "I am not, for discussing a controversy like this, in a very strong position myself: prosody is a subject which I never could master. In reading the varieties of Greek and Latin verse, I was always content to hammer out some sort of tune in my head, and could never retain for any length of time the difference between alcaics, anacreontics and sapphics, though I loved some of the poetry. This does not reflect upon my tutors; nor do I suggest for a moment that the composition of Greek and Latin verses should be discouraged. I believe it to be an excellent discipline; but equally good for turning out efficient doctors, lawyers, statesmen and men of business; and of the best artists in this kind that I know, one is an important man of practical affairs."

16†. in *HGM*: "in its place and time"

17†. in *HGM*: "matters most"

18. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1930 TSE observed of Bridges's metrical innovations: "Some readers prefer his earlier lyrical verse to most of his later and more ambitious experimentation; but whether this taste is later confirmed or not, it is certain that his 'experimentation' has served a valuable purpose. It has helped to accustom readers of verse to a more liberal conception of verse technique, and to the notion that the development of technique is a serious and unceasing subject of study among verse writers" (4.141). In a letter of 9 Aug 1930, TSE told William Force Stead that "Bridges' *Testament* is really and truly a blind spot in my eye" (*L5* 287).

19†. in *HGM*: "one of the most important"; TSE may have in mind W. H. Auden's experiments with Old English (Anglo-Saxon) poetic forms.

20. In *Ezra Pound: His Metric and Poetry* (1917), TSE writes: "That he abandons nothing of his technical skill is evident from the translation from the Anglo-Saxon, the 'Seafarer.' It is not a slight achievement to have brought to life alliterative verse: perhaps the 'Seafarer' is the only successful piece of alliterative verse ever written in modern English; alliterative verse which is not merely a clever tour de force, but which suggests the possibility of a new development of this form" (1.635). In "The Seafarer" (1911), Pound adapts the first 99 lines of the Anglo-Saxon poem in alliterative lines of four stresses.

21†. in *HGM*: "alliterative and assonant"

22†. in *HGM*: "by Daniel's reply – even if he had been"

23†. in *HGM*: "in his conception of the drama"

24†. in *HGM*: "followed in our language"

25*. TSE's note: "When Mr. Drinkwater says (*Victorian Poetry*) 'there is now no new verse form to be discovered in English' it is his own conception of form that precludes novelty. He really means 'there can be no new verse form exactly like the old ones' – or like what he thinks the old ones are. See a curious book on the relation of poetry to music, intended for readers with no technical knowledge of music, *Magic of Melody*, by John Murray Gibbon (Dent)." Quotation from John Drinkwater, *Victorian Poetry* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1924), 17. TSE read Gibbon's *Magic of Melody* (1933) upon his return to the United Kingdom.

26†. The following line was cut from *HGM*: "not the later imitators of the Spenserian form – not even Byron –"

27†. in *HGM*: "superficially"

28†. in *HGM*: "and I think owes him little"

29†. in *HGM*: "genuinely"

30. In "Thinking in Verse: A Survey of Early Seventeenth-Century Poetry" (1930), TSE discusses "music" in verse, noting "the lyrics of Shakespeare or Campion, which *demand* the kindred music of the lute or other instrument" (4.46). Campion composed musical settings for solo voice with lute accompaniment.

31†. in *HGM* the next sentence begins, "I do not know, of course, how Shakespeare composed his songs;"

32*. TSE's note: "The real superiority of Shakespeare's songs over Campion's is not to be found, so to speak, internally, but in their setting. I have elsewhere commented upon the intense dramatic value of Shakespeare's songs at the points where they occur in the plays." TSE refers to his discussion of Shakespeare's songs in "Dryden the Poet" (1931). "Come away, come away, death" is sung by Feste, the Fool, to the heartbroken but self-indulgent Orsino in *Twelfth Night* II.iv.51-56.

33†. in *HGM*: "literature"

34†. The following sentence was cut from *HGM*: "But I should hazard the guess that anyone who would follow through the course of the development of English verse at that time, must also acquaint himself thoroughly with the development of English music: and that is a domain into which I am myself unqualified to pursue the quarry."

35. Sir Philip Sidney's *An Apology for Poetry*, or *The Defense of Poetry* (1595) is believed to have been written circa 1580 partly in response to Stephen Gosson's *The School of Abuse* (1579). Although Sidney did not challenge Gosson's low opinion of English plays (with the exception of the Senecan tragedy *Gorboduc* [1565]), he defended the dignity of imaginative literature.

36†. in *HGM*: "his sensibility to"

37. In *An Apology for Poetry*, Sidney remarks of the anonymous fifteenth-century *The Ballad of Chevy Chase*, "I never heard the old song of Percy and Douglas that I found not my heart moved more than with a trumpet" and of Chaucer's *Troilus and Criseyde* (complete by 1388), "Chaucer, undoubtedly, did excellently in his *Troilus and Criseyde*; of whom, truly, I know not whether to marvel more, either that he in that misty time could see so clearly, or that we in this clear age walk so stumblingly after him" (*Elizabethan Critical Essays*, vol 1, 178, 196; subsequent page references to *An Apology for Poetry* in the text and notes are from this edition.)

38. tares (OED): "as name of an injurious weed among corn"; the word was adopted by English translators of the New Testament and commonly used in Biblical commentaries.

39†. in *HGM*: "who flourished"

40. In "Thomas Heywood" (1931), TSE observes: "Middleton's *The Changeling*, in every other respect a far finer play, must share with *A Woman Killed with Kindness* the discredit of having the weakest underplot of any important play in the whole Elizabethan repertory" (4.331).

TSE follows Swinburne's attack on the vulgarity of the subplot of *The Changeling* (ca. 1623) in his introduction to the 1887 Mermaid Series edition of Middleton's plays.

41. In "Thomas Heywood," TSE offers qualified praise for Heywood's "skill in the construction of plays" but adds: "It is in the underplot, as in some other plays, that Heywood is least skilful" (4.331), and in "Cyril Tourneur" (1930), he notes "that offensive tastelessness which is so positive as to be itself a kind of taste, which we find in the work of Marston" (4.201).

42. *The Witch of Edmonton* (1658) by William Rowley, Thomas Dekker, and John Ford is a tragicomedy combining a domestic murder plot with one concerning a woman who sells her soul to the devil (who appears to her in the form of a dog). TSE saw a performance of this play by the Phoenix Society at the Lyric Theatre in Apr 1920.

43. TSE discourses on "comic relief" at greater length in "Dryden the Critic" (1931) (4.290).

44†. in *HGM*: "impropriety or scabrousness"

45. † in *HGM*: "more highly developed, more civilized."

46. In Jean Racine's tragedy *Bérénice* (1670), the protagonist Titus chooses his duty to Rome over his love for Bérénice, queen of Palestine; in "Religious Drama: Mediaeval and Modern" (1937), TSE drew out the implicit religious significance: "And the high points of French drama seem to me to be in plays of deeply religious significance: explicit in the *Polyeucte* of Cornellie, and implicit in the *Bérénice* of Racine."

47. In "Dryden the Critic" (1931), TSE remarks à propos the neoclassical dramatic Unities: "*unity of poetic feeling* (which is the only unity that matters) can be obtained *as a rule*, with a minimum of difference between times and places" (4.290).

48. Scholars have suggested that comic scenes in Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* may have been supplied by the actor John Adams. Ben Jonson's *Volpone* was first produced in 1606 and Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* was written after 1605 but before 1610; William Congreve's comedy *The Way of the World* premiered in 1700.

49. In a letter of 25 Nov 1928, TSE clarified for H. S. Bennett, who was editing Marlowe's *The Jew of Malta*, the interpretation of the play he advanced in "Christopher Marlowe" (1919): "I was careful not to call it 'Caricature' straight out, and I qualified my suggestion of farce: I mean that by using these terms cautiously one gets nearer to the play than by treating it merely as huffe-snuffe tragedy" (*L4* 337).

50†. The following sentence is cut from *HGM*: "Nicholas Nickleby writing his play to include the pump which Mr. Vincent Crummles had bought, is only another example." In *The Life and Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby* (1839) by Charles Dickens, Vincent Crummles persuades Nicholas to join his theater company as actor and dramatist. In his 1913 graduate essay "[Inconsistencies in Bergson's Idealism]," TSE cut a quotation by Crummles in chapter 23 of the novel (1.85 n.41).

51†. in *HGM*: "humanization"

52†. in *HGM*: " – to mention these two plays only because I have seen them acted recently (and Shakespeare's plays are meant to be acted) –"

53†. in *HGM*: "Here is in itself an audacity in construction – and audacity in the sense in which Beethoven's quartettes [*sic*] are audacious – which is a prodigious piece of political satire"

54. A line spoken by Enobarbus as an ironic comment on drunken Lepidus, who together with Antony and Octavius are the triumvirs of Rome; Lepidus is deposed by Octavius (*Antony and Cleopatra* II.vii.107).

55†. in *HGM*: "essential for understanding"

56†. in *HGM*: "very much"

57†. in *HGM*: "misinterpreted as meaning"

58. In "Hamlet" (1919) TSE contends: "We are surely justified in attributing the play, with that other profoundly interesting play of 'intractable' material and astonishing versification, *Measure for Measure*, to a period of crisis, after which follow the tragic successes which culminate

in *Coriolanus*. *Coriolanus* may be not as 'interesting' as *Hamlet*, but it is, with *Antony and Cleopatra*, Shakespeare's most assured artistic success" (2.124).

59. In his preface to G. Wilson Knight's *The Wheel of Fire* (1930), TSE writes: "To take Shakespeare's work as a whole, no longer to single out several plays as the greatest, and mark the others only as apprenticeship or decline – is I think an important and positive step in modern Shakespeare interpretation" (4.149).

60†. in *HGM*: "but they are of the utmost significance to me because of the relation between the degree of unification reached and the diversity and quality of the emotions not quite perfectly unified."

61†. in *HGM*: "precepts"

62. Lines from *The Death Bed* (1831) by the poet and humorist Thomas Hood (1799-1845).

63†. in *HGM*: "every great play"

64†. the following sentence was cut from *HGM*: "This is more readily admitted by poets, who are consciously attempting the impossible, than by people merely occupied in living, who, so far as they are conscious that a thing is impossible, less often attempt it."

65†. in *HGM*: "like the Ten Commandments."

66†. in *HGM*: "flagrantly"

67†. in *HGM*: "I maintain my heresy"

68. In Act 4 of *Hamlet*, Claudius sends Hamlet to England, supposedly for his safety, but with the intention of having him murdered. This twist in the plot was sometimes viewed as a regrettable delay in the revenge tragedy. Samuel Johnson's *Preface* (1765) mounted a celebrated defense of Shakespeare's plays from the accusation that he violated the "three unities."

69†. in *HGM*: "much the same as"

70†. in *HGM* the sentence ends: "– I will not be accused of trying to invent a fourth Unity, like the scientist described by Ronald Knox who professed to have discovered a new sin." In Father Knox's story "The New Sin" in *Essays in Satire* (1930), Professor Laileb hires the Albert Hall in London to announce the discovery of a new sin, only then to rebuke his audience for the age-old sin of curiosity, before disappearing in a clap of thunder. Knox repeatedly warned that science should not usurp authority in areas outside of its proper domain.

71. *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*, with a critical text and translation of *The Poetics*, Samuel Henry Butcher (London: Macmillan, 1895), 263. In *HGM*, TSE also quotes the ancient Greek for the "meaning of the whole" – *τὸ τέλος μέγιστον ἁπάντων*. TSE owned Butcher's translation of *The Poetics of Aristotle*, 3rd ed. (1902), signed "T. S. Eliot / 1919."

72*. TSE's note: "The authority for the Unity of Place is usually held to be Castelvetro. This is not, of course, an Aristotelian doctrine." In 1570, Lodovico Castelvetro (1505-71) published a commentary on Aristotle's *Poetics*: unlike Aristotle, Castelvetro insisted on Unity of Place as a prescriptive law.

73†. in *HGM*: "of my acquaintance"

74†. in *HGM*: "triumphantly"

75. Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) follows protagonist Leopold Bloom through Dublin over the course of a single day, 16 June 1904.

76†. in *HGM* this sentence begins: "But Sir Philip was not in a position to know as much about what Aristotle meant as I am, or about the true practitioners of the Unities. He had not read Butcher or Bywater." Ingram Bywater (1840-1914) was an eminent classical scholar who produced editions of Heraclitus and Aristotle. His preface to the *Poetics* was dismissive of the aesthetic theory advanced by Butcher's *Aristotle's Theory of Poetry and Fine Art*.

77†. The corresponding passage in *HGM* reads: "he was neither the first nor the last to be deceived into putting a narrow or distorted interpretation upon the text. My point is simply that Sidney, as a representative of the classicising movement in England, was justified in his strictures upon the drama of his day; that however strait his opinions, his taste was reaching out in the same direction as that in which the greater Elizabethan dramatists, I mean Shakespeare and Jonson, moved in the course of their development."

78. Ben Jonson, *Timber or Discoveries Made upon Men and Matter* (1641), ed. Felix E. Schelling (Boston: Ginn, 1892), 7.

79. Sidney's sister, Mary Herbert, Countess of Pembroke, was the patron of a literary circle that included Spenser and Daniel.

80. In "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (1927), TSE observes: "The French drama is from the beginning restrained and decorous; to the French drama . . . the Senecan drama of Greville, Daniel and Alexander is allied" (3.208).

81. On 3 Dec 1928, TSE told J. M. Robertson that "my affirmation that Marlowe was influenced by Spenser was supported" by Robertson's own remarks in *Elizabethan Literature* (1914). The following day Robertson replied to TSE pointing to textual evidence for his disputed theory (*L4* 343-45).

82†. *HGM* continues with the following sentence: "By itself, it appears merely as a literary curiosity."

83. George Puttenham (1529-90) likely author of *The Arte of English Poesie* (1589); William Webbe (fl.1566?-1591) author of *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (1586). Saintsbury offers accounts of these works in *A History of Criticism*, vol 2, 178-86, observing that "we must lay our account with the almost certain fact that all writers of this period had seen Sidney's *Defence* at least in MS. or had heard of it" (183).

84. ποιεῖν: *poiein* "to make"

85. Sidney writes: "Poesy, therefore, is an art of imitation, for so Aristotle termeth it in the word *Mimesis*, that is to say, a representing, counterfeiting, or figuring forth" [158]. Sidney's notion of imitation differs from Aristotle's remarks on *mimesis* in the *Poetics* (I.2) by placing an emphasis on invention for the purposes of moral instruction.

86. *A Discourse of English Poetrie* (London: Robert Walley, 1586) in *Elizabethan Critical Essays*, vol 1, 231. Webbe, like Sidney, traces the etymological definition of poetry back to the Greek ποιεῖν "to make" and also comments on the Latin word *vates*, which Sidney translates as "a diviner, foreseer, or prophet" [154].

87. The rhetorical theory advanced in *The Arte of English Poesie* contends that the style of a poem should be appropriate to the status or class of the people depicted.

88. Stephen Gosson (1554-1624), author of *Schoole of Abuse, containing a pleasant invective against Poets, Pipers, Plaiers, Jesters and such like Caterpillars of the Commonwealth* (1579), which he dedicated to Sidney. Sidney's *Apology* responds to the terms of Gosson's Puritan attack on the immorality of poetry; in particular, Sidney disputes the charge that poets are liars.

89. Sidney discusses three kinds of poets: "The second kind is of them that deal with matters philosophical" [158].

90. In "The Early Novel" (1929), TSE examines Lyly's role in the development of the English novel (3.691).

91†. in *HGM*: "a little more satisfactorily to myself"

92†. in *HGM*: "naturally"

93†. in *HGM*: "his novel (*Arcadia*)"

94. Sidney was a prolific sonneteer: *Astrophel and Stella* (1591) created a literary fashion in the 1590s for Petrarchan sonnet sequences. His long epic romance *Arcadia* (1590; 1593), written in alternating passages of prose and verse, is based on Italian prototypes, using an idyllic pastoral setting. In "The Elizabethan Grub Street" (1929), TSE called *Arcadia* "the dullest novel in the language" (3.634).

95†. in *HGM*: "mild beer and mild bawdry"

96†. in *HGM*: "meets still at such theatres as the Islington Empire, Collins's and the Kilburn Empire"; TSE saw various music-hall artists at the Islington Empire (built in 1860) on Islington High Street, London; in 1932 it was turned into a cinema. Collins' Music Hall was situated in nearby Islington Green. Kilburn Empire in Camden, London, had been converted from a music hall into a cinema in 1928. Marie Lloyd gave one of her last performances at the Kilburn Empire in 1922.

97†. in *HGM*: "sense of pathos"

98†. in *HGM* the article ends: "Shakespeare can never be explained; but the richness and brilliance of the period as a whole seems to come by the cooperation and conflict of the more and the less educated elements."

Lecture III

The Age of Dryden

December 2nd, 1932[1]

In my previous lecture I was concerned with the Elizabethan critical mind expressing itself before the greater part of the great literature of the age had been written. Between them and Dryden occurs one great critical mind, that of a great poet whose critical writing appears to belong to quite the end of the period. If I treated Ben Jonson's opinions with complete respect, I should condemn myself for speaking or writing at all; for he says roundly, "to judge of poets is only the faculty of poets; and not of all poets, but the best."[2] Nevertheless, though I am not a good enough poet to judge of Jonson, I have already tried to do so, and cannot now make matters worse. Between Sidney and Campion in the latter part of the sixteenth century, and Jonson writing towards the end of his life, the greatest period of English poetry is comprehended; and the maturing of the English mind in this time is well seen by reading the treatises of Sidney and his contemporaries, and then the *Discoveries* of Jonson. He called his *Discoveries* also *Timber*, and it is timber with much undergrowth and dead wood in it, but also living trees. In some places, Jonson does but express in a more adult style the same commonplaces. About poetry:

> The study of it (if we will trust Aristotle) offers to mankind a certain rule, and pattern of living well, and happily; disposing us to all civil offices of society. If we will believe Tully, it nourisheth, and instructeth, our youth; delights our age; adorns our prosperity; comforts our adversity; entertains us at home; keeps us company abroad, travails with us; watches, divides the time of our earnest, and sports; shares in our country recesses, and recreations; insomuch as the wisest and best learned have thought her the absolute mistress of manners, and nearest of kin to virtue. [90-91]

This list of the merits of poetry, with its conditional references to Aristotle and Tully, has the quaintness of a generation near to Montaigne, and is no more convincing than a patent medicine circular; and it has some of the heavy sententiousness of Francis Bacon.[3] Secondary to the serious advantages to be derived from poetry, comes the assurance that poetry gives pleasure, or, as he says, guides us by the hand of action, with a ravishing delight, and incredible sweetness. The questions implied are, as I said towards the end of my last lecture, among those fundamental to criticism: Jonson has put them in a riper style than that of the critics who wrote in his youth, but he has not advanced the enquiry. The authority of antiquity, and the assent of our prejudices, are enough. It is rather in his practical criticism – I mean here not so much his criticism of individual writers, but his advice to the practitioner – that Jonson has made progress. He requires in the poet, first, "a goodness of natural wit" [91]. "To this perfection of nature in our poet, we require exercise of those parts, and frequent" [92]. His third requisite in a poet pleases me especially: "The third requisite in our poet, or maker, is *Imitation*, to be able to convert the substances, or riches of another poet, to his own use" [93]. When we come to a passage beginning "In writing there is to be regarded the Invention, and the Fashion" [82] we may, if we have already read some later critics, expect more than we get. For so far as I understand him Jonson means nothing more than that before you write you must have something to write about; which is a manifest truth frequently ignored both by those who are trying to learn to write and by some of those who endeavour to teach writing. But when we compare such passages as these from Jonson with the passage which I quoted from Dryden in my first lecture, we feel that in Dryden we meet for the first time a man who is speaking to *us*. It is from a critical essay written before Dryden had really found out how to write poetry; but it is something very different from an appeal to the ancients; it is really analytical. I will presume to quote it again for the purpose of closer examination:

> The first happiness of the poet's imagination is properly invention, or the finding of the thought; the second is fancy, or the variation, deriving, or moulding of that thought, as the judgment represents it proper to the subject; the third is elocution, or the art of clothing and adorning that thought, so found and varied, in apt, significant, and sounding words; the quickness of the imagination is seen in the invention, the fertility in the fancy, and the accuracy in the expression.[4]

"Finding of the thought" does not mean finding a copybook maxim, or starting with a synopsis of what we are going to put into verse, finding an "idea" which is later to be "clothed and adorned" in a rather literal interpretation of the metaphor.[5] It corresponds to the inception of any piece of imaginative writing. It is not casting about for a subject, upon which, when found, the "imagination" is to be exercised; for we must remark that "invention" is the first moment in a process only the *whole* of which Dryden calls "imagination," and no less than the whole of which corresponds to the celebrated and admirable account of imagination given by Shakespeare in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.[6] "Invention" in the sense used here by Dryden does not seem to me to be properly covered by the *New English Dictionary*, which quotes this very passage in support of the following definition: "The devising of a subject, idea, or method of treatment, by exercise of the intellect or imagination." The words "intellect or imagination" strike me as a burking of the question: if there is a clear distinction between invention by exercise of intellect and invention by exercise of imagination, then two definitions are called for; and if there is no difference between intellectual and imaginative invention there can hardly be much difference between imagination and intellect. But Dryden is talking expressly about imagination, not about intellect. Furthermore, the word "devising" suggests the deliberate putting together out of materials at hand; whereas I believe that Dryden's "invention" includes the sudden irruption of the germ of a new poem, possibly merely as a state of feeling. His "invention" is surely a finding, a *trouvaille*.[7] "Fancy" represents the conscious elaboration of the original *donnée*[8] – I prefer not to call that which is found by invention by the name of "idea"; and fancy, I believe, covers also the conscious and deliberate uniting of several inventions in one poem. "Variation, deriving, or moulding of that thought," Dryden calls it. "Variation" and "moulding" are, I think, pretty clear; "deriving" is more difficult. I think that the definition 3B in the *N.E.D.* comes pretty close to it: "To extend by branches or modifications."[9] Fancy is an activity of the imagination rather than of the intellect, but is necessarily in part an intellectual activity, inasmuch as it is a "moulding of the thought as judgment represents it proper." Dryden does not, I believe, necessarily imply that the "third happiness" of poetic imagination, "elocution," is a third *act*; I mean, that the act of finding the proper words, "clothing and adorning" the thought, begins only after the operation of fancy is complete. In fancy the finding of the words seems to me already to have begun; that is, fancy is partly verbal; nevertheless, the work of elocution, "clothing and adorning in apt, significant and sounding words," is the last to be completed. Observe that "sounding" here means what we, just as approximately, should be likely to call "musical": the finding of the words and the order of words expressive of the underlying mood which belongs to the invention. (Shakespeare's great line in *King Lear*,

Never, never, never, never, never,[10]

is just as *sounding* as Poe's line admired by Ernest Dowson,

The viol, the violet and the vine.)[11]

We are liable, I think, to underrate Dryden's critical analyses, by assuming that they only apply to the kind of poetry that he writes himself; and thus we may overlook his meaning, as of the word "invention." Even if Dryden's poetry seems to us of a peculiar, and, as it has seemed to many, a peculiarly unpoetic type, we need not conclude that his mind operated quite differently from those of poets at other periods; and we must remember his catholic and discriminating taste in poetry.

I do not need, I think, to quote again here the passage from Coleridge which I quoted in contrast to that of Dryden, because I do not propose to examine it so narrowly. You will have observed the more developed etymological sense. I am not sure that Coleridge has made as satisfactory an analysis as that of Dryden. The distinction is too simple. The last sentence, "Milton has a highly imaginative, Cowley a very fanciful mind," should be enough to arouse suspicion.[12] It represents a course of argument which is specious. You assert a distinction, you select two authors who illustrate it to your satisfaction, and you ignore the negative instances or difficult cases. If Coleridge had written, "Spenser had a highly imaginative, Donne a very fanciful mind," the assumed superiority of imagination to fancy might not appear quite so immediately convincing. Not only Cowley, but all the metaphysical poets, had very fanciful minds, and if you removed the fancy and left only imagination, as Coleridge appears to use these terms, you would have no metaphysical poetry.[13] The distinction is admittedly a distinction of value; the term "fancy" is really made derogatory, just applicable to clever verse that you do not like.

Between Dryden, and Wordsworth and Coleridge the one great critical mind is that of Johnson. After Dryden, and before Johnson, there is much just criticism, but no great critic. The inferiority of common minds to great is more painfully apparent in those modest exercises of the mind in which common sense and sensibility are needed, than in their failure to ascend to the higher flights of genius. Addison is a conspicuous example of this embarrassing mediocrity, and he is a symptom of the age which he announced. The difference between the temper of the eighteenth century and that of the seventeenth is profound. Here, for example, is Addison on the subject on which we have already heard Dryden and Coleridge, the Imagination:

> There are few words in the English language which are employed in a more loose and uncircumscribed sense than those of the fancy and the imagination. I therefore thought it necessary to fix and determine the notion of these two words, as I intend to make use of them in the thread of my following speculations, that the reader may conceive rightly what is the subject which I proceed upon.[14]*

It is perhaps as well to warn you that Addison is a writer towards whom I feel something very like antipathy. It seems to me that even in these few words the smugness and priggishness of the man appear. Of an age during which the Church sank to an unloveliness unequalled before or since, Addison was one of the most apposite ornaments; he possessed the Christian virtues, and all in the wrong order: humility was the least of his attainments.[15] It would seem, from this account of "fancy" and "imagination," that Addison had never read, certainly never pondered, Dryden's remarks upon the subject. I do not feel sure, however, that this yoking of fancy and imagination by Addison did not strike the eye of Coleridge, and start him upon his process of differentiation. For Dryden "imagination" was the whole process of poetic creation in which fancy was one element. Addison starts out to "fix and determine" the notion of the two words; I cannot find any fixing or determining of the word "fancy" in this or the following essays on the subject; he is entirely occupied with the imagination, and primarily with the visual imagination, and solely with the visual imagination according to Mr. Locke. That is a debt which he hastens to acknowledge: he pays a handsome testimonial to the scientific truths which Locke has established.[16] Alas, philosophy is not science, nor is literary criticism; and it is an elementary error to think that we have discovered as objective laws what we have merely imposed by private legislation.[17]

It is curious to find the old notions of delight and instruction, with which the sixteenth century defended poetry, cropping up again in a form typical of the age of Addison, but hardly with any greater profundity of meaning. Addison observes that:

> A man of a polite imagination is let into a great many pleasures that the vulgar are not capable of receiving. He can converse with a picture, and

> find an agreeable companion in a statue. He meets with a secret refreshment in a description, and often feels a greater satisfaction in the prospect of fields and meadows, than another does in the possession. [823-24]

The eighteenth-century emphases are illuminating. Instead of the courtier, we have the man of polite imagination. I suppose that Addison is what one would describe as a gentleman; as one might say, no better than a gentleman. His notion of recommending imagination, because it enables you to enjoy a statue or a piece of property without having to put your hand in your pocket to pay for it, is a very happy thought indeed. And gentleman as he is, he has a very low opinion of those who are not genteel:

> There are indeed but very few who know how to be idle and innocent, or have a relish of any pleasures that are not criminal. [824]

Tell that, we might add, to the Unemployed.[18] The particular examination of Addison may be left to Mr. Saintsbury, whose *History of Criticism* is always delightful, generally useful, and most often right.[19] My introduction of Addison has not been, however, merely in order to poke fun at him.[20] What is interesting and relevant to observe in Addison is not merely deterioration, a deterioration of society, but of interesting change. In the same series of papers on Imagination he says:

> It may here be worth our while to examine how it comes to pass that several readers, who are all acquainted with the same language, and know the meaning of the words they read, should nevertheless have a different relish of the same descriptions.[21]

Addison does not succeed in following up this very important question with any very important answer, but it is suggestive as the first awareness of the problem of communication; and his whole discussion of the nature of imagination, however fruitless for the purposes of literary criticism, is a very interesting attempt at a general aesthetics. Any matter which comes eventually to be the subject of detailed investigation and specialised labour may be preceded, long before any fruitful development takes place, by such random guesses as these, which though not directly productive of fruitful results indicate the direction in which the mind is moving.

Addison, although too poor a poet to be strictly comparable to the other critics whom I have mentioned and have to mention, acquires importance by being thoroughly representative of his age. The history of every branch of intellectual activity provides the same record of the diminution of England from the time of Queen Anne. It is not so much the intellect, but something superior to intellect, which went for a long time into eclipse; and this luminary, by whatever name we may call it, has not yet wholly issued from its secular obnubilation.[22] The age of Dryden was still a great age, though beginning to suffer a death of the spirit, as the coarsening of its verse-rhythms shows; by the time of Addison theology, devotion and poetry fell fast into a formalistic slumber. Addison is definitely a writer for a middle class, a bourgeois literary dictator.[23] He was a popular lecturer. To him poetry meant delight and edification in a new way. Johnson has here, in his own language, fixed admirably the difference between Dryden and Addison as directors of taste:

> Dryden had, not many years before, scattered criticism over his prefaces with very little parsimony; but though he sometimes condescended to be somewhat familiar, his manner was in general too scholastic for those who had yet their rudiments to learn, and found it not easy to understand their master. His observations were framed rather for those that were learning to write, than for those that read only to talk.
>
> An instructor like Addison was now wanting, whose remarks, being superficial, might be easily understood, and being just, might prepare the mind for more attainments. Had he presented *Paradise Lost* to the public with all the pomp of system and severity of science, the criticism would perhaps have been admired, and the poem still have been neglected; but by the blandishments of gentleness and facility he has made Milton an universal favourite, with whom readers of every class think it necessary to be pleased.[24]

It was still then, apparently, a not unlettered period, in which readers of *any* class could think it necessary to be pleased with *Paradise Lost*.[25] But the usual classification of Dryden, Addison and Johnson together as critics of an Augustan age fails to allow adequately for two differences: the spiritual deterioration in society between the periods of the first two, and the remarkable isolation of the third. It is surely by unconscious irony that we speak of an "age of Johnson" as we do of an "age of Dryden" or an "age of Addison." Lonely in his life, Johnson seems to me still more lonely in his intellectual and moral existence.[26] He could not even very much *like* the poetry of his age with which admirers of the eighteenth century now "think it necessary to be pleased"; if more than just to Collins, he was no more than severe to Gray.[27] He himself, I am convinced, is their superior as a poet, not in sensibility, not in metrical dexterity or aptness of phrase, but in a moral elevation just short of sublimity.[28]

Such writing as Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* and his essay on Shakespeare loses none of its permanence from the consideration that every generation must make its own appraisal of the poetry of the past, in the light of the performance of its contemporaries and immediate predecessors.[29] Criticism of poetry moves between two extremes. On the one hand the critic may busy himself so much with the implications of a poem, or of one poet's work – implications moral, social, religious or other – that the poetry becomes hardly more than a text for a discourse. Such is the tendency of the moralising critics of the nineteenth century, to which Landor makes a notable exception.[30] Or if you stick too closely to the "poetry" and adopt no attitude towards what the poet has to say, you will tend to evacuate it of all significance. And furthermore there is a philosophic borderline, which you must not transgress too far or too often, if you wish to preserve your standing as a critic, and are not prepared to present yourself as a philosopher, metaphysician, sociologist, or psychologist instead. Johnson, in these respects, is a type of critical integrity. Within his limitations, he is one of the great critics; and he is a great critic partly because he keeps within his limitations. When you know what they are, you know where you are. Considering all the temptations to which one is exposed in judging contemporary writing, all the prejudices which one is tempted to indulge in judging writers of the immediately preceding generation, I view Johnson's *Lives of the Poets* as a masterpiece of the judicial bench. His style is not so formally perfect as that of some other prose writers of his time. It reads often like the writing of a man who is more habituated to talking than to writing; he seems to think aloud, and in short breaths, rather than in the long periods of the historian or the orator. His criticism is as salutary against the dogmatic excesses of the eighteenth century – more indulged in France than in England – as it is against excessive adulation of individual poets with their faults as well as virtues.[31] We shall have, in the nineteenth century, several vagaries to contemplate, of critics who do not so much practise criticism as make use of it for other purposes. For Johnson poetry was still poetry, and not another thing.[32] Had he lived a generation later, he would have been obliged to look more deeply into the foundations, and so would have been unable to leave us an example of what criticism ought to be for a civilisation which, being settled, has no need, while it lasts, to enquire into the functions of its parts.

NOTES

1. This lecture was advertised on 28 Oct as "The Classical Tradition: Dryden and Johnson."

2. Ben Jonson, *Timber: or, Discoveries*. TSE modernizes the spelling and alters some punctuation in his copy of the Bodley Head Quartos edition, *Discoveries 1641 / Conversations with William Drummond of Hawthornden 1619,* ed. G. B. Harrison (London: John Lane, 1923), 97.

3. Jonson refers to the defense of a Greek poet *Pro Archia poeta* delivered by the Roman orator Tully or Marcus Tullius Cicero in 62 BC. In "The Genesis of Philosophic Prose" (1929), TSE observes: "The style of Hooker, and the style of Bacon, have a stiffness due to their intellectual antecedents being Latin and not English prose" (3.645).

4. "The Proper Wit of Poetry" (1667), *Dryden's Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (London: Dent, 1912), 192.

5. In Elizabethan England a copybook was a book in which copies of documents are written or printed for pupils to imitate.

6. TSE refers to Theseus's speech: "The poet's eye, in a fine frenzy rolling, / Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven; / And as imagination bodies forth / The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen / Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing / A local habitation and a name." *A Midsummer Night's Dream* V.i.12-17.

7. *trouvaille*: a lucky find

8. *donnée* (OED): "The subject, theme, or motif of a story, play, etc.; a datum; a basic fact, assumption, etc."

9. *Read*: "ramifications" for "modifications"

10. King Lear's words are spoken over his lifeless daughter's body moments before his own death (*King Lear* V.iii.307).

11. The lines appear in Edgar Allan Poe's "The City in the Sea" (1845). In a memoir of Dowson, Arthur Symons writes: "I remember his saying to me that his ideal of a line of verse was the line of Poe: "The viol, the violet and the vine.'" "Ernest Dowson, A Memoir" in *The Poems of Ernest Dowson* (London: John Lane, 1905), xxv.

12. *Biographia Literaria* (1817), ed. J. Shawcross, vol 1 (London: Oxford UP, 1907), 202.

13. TSE examines Cowley's poetry in depth in his seventh Clark lecture, "Cowley and the Transition" (2.725), and further in "The Minor Metaphysicals: From Cowley to Dryden" (1930) (4.109).

14. * TSE's note: "*The Spectator*, June 21st, 1712, No. 411"; untitled essay on the imagination, *Spectator*, 411 (21 June 1712), 823.

15. During the reign of Queen of Anne (1702-14) High Church Tories, dissatisfied with policy toward Dissenters, bemoaned "The Church in Danger."

16. Addison writes: 'by the Pleasures of the Imagination, I mean only such Pleasures as arise originally from Sight, and that I divide these Pleasures into two Kinds: My Design being first of all to Discourse of those Primary Pleasures of the Imagination, which entirely proceed from such Objects as are before our Eyes; and in the next place to speak of those Secondary Pleasures

of the Imagination which flow from the Ideas of visible Objects, when the Objects are not actually before the Eye, but are called up into our Memories, or formed into agreeable Visions of Things that are either Absent or Fictitious.” *Spectator*, 411 (21 June 1712), 823. In *An Essay concerning Human Understanding* (1690), Locke distinguishes between the external objects of sight and the ideas to which they give rise.

17. TSE took his epigraph to “The Perfect Critic” (1920) from Remy de Gourmont: “Ériger en lois ses impressions personnelles, c’est le grand effort d’un homme s’il est sincère” [“the whole effort of a sincere man is to make his personal impressions into universal laws”; trans. Richard Aldington] (2.262).

18. TSE addresses the question of mass unemployment in his *Criterion* “Commentary” for Jan 1932 (4.401). In a letter to the Archbishop of York of 7 Nov 1933, he writes: “the important point is to gain an admission of the fact that the unemployed ought to be better looked after than they are.”

19. TSE refers to Saintsbury’s remarks on Addison in *A History of Criticism and Literary Taste in Europe*, vol 2 (London: Oxford, 1902), 437-48.

20. In a letter of 8 Dec 1932, TSE replied to Paul Elmer More in a conciliatory spirit: “I am ready to concede fully your points about Addison and Saintsbury: these were lecture-hall attitudes, capricious and unperpended.”

21. Untitled essay on the imagination, *Spectator*, 416 (27 June 1712), 834.

22. obnubilation (OED): “The action of darkening or fact of being darkened with or as with a cloud; obscuration”

23. Saintsbury remarks: “During the latter part of his rather short lifetime Addison, it is hardly necessary to say, enjoyed a sort of mild dictatorship in Criticism as in other departments of literature.” *A History of Criticism*, vol 2, 437.

24. “Life of Addison,” *Lives* 247.

25. Addison published a series of weekly essays on *Paradise Lost* in the *Spectator* from 5 Jan to 3 May 1712 (nos. 267-369). They were well received and collected into a volume in 1719.

26. Sir Joshua Reynolds revealed Johnson’s terror of loneliness: “solitude to him was horror . . . Any company to him was better than none.” *Life and Times of Sir Joshua Reynolds*, vol 2 (London: John Murray, 1865), 455.

27. In his “Life of Collins,” Johnson remarks of William Collins, who was a personal acquaintance, “As men are often esteemed who cannot be loved, so the poetry of Collins may sometimes extort praise when it gives little pleasure”; Johnson was not generally sympathetic to Thomas Gray’s poetry, confessing that “I contemplate it with less pleasure than his life,” but he praised “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” (1751): “Had Gray written often thus, it had been vain to blame, and useless to praise him” (*Lives* 460, 499, 502). In “Andrew Marvell” (1921), TSE remarks: “When we come to Gray and Collins, the sophistication remains only in the language, and has disappeared from the feeling. Gray and Collins were masters, but they had lost that hold on human values, that firm grasp of human experience, which is a formidable achievement of the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets” (2.313). Saintsbury contrasts Johnson’s estimations of Collins and Gray at length in *A History of Criticism*, vol 2, 491-93.

28. On 10 Jan 1930, TSE informed Hugh Macdonald that his forthcoming introduction to Johnson’s verse satires would “fix the place of Johnson among the innumerable small but competent coupleteers of his time” (*L5* 32).

29. TSE echoes Johnson's observations on the "relative and comparative" nature of valuations of literary excellence advanced in his *Rambler* essay of 28 May 1751: "every new genius produces some innovation, which, when invented and approved, subverts the rules which the practice of foregoing authors had established." *The Works of Samuel Johnson*, vol 5 (London: Longman, 1792), 345. In a lecture on "The Study of Shakespeare Criticism" in St. Louis on 16 Jan 1933, TSE praised Johnson's 1765 *Preface* to his edition of Shakespeare as an ideal combination of critic and writer (4.837).

30. TSE departs here from Saintsbury's *History of Criticism*, which declares that Landor's critical shortcomings "are the obvious and practically inevitable result of certain well-known peculiarities of temperament, moral rather than intellectual" (vol 3, 276). In a letter of 4 Apr 1935, TSE remarked to Pound, who admired Landor's *Imaginary Conversations of Literary Men and Statesmen* (1824-29): "you DO consider Landor a good critic when you agree with him."

31. In "Experiment in Criticism" (1929), TSE reflects on what he perceived as the bad influence of French neoclassicism: "there is a large body of criticism, a considerable quantity in English and still more in French, written by men who were professionally critics rather than creative writers: the most famous critic of this sort is of course Boileau. This type of critic was primarily the *arbiter of taste*, and his task was to praise and condemn the work of his contemporaries, and especially to lay down the laws of good writing. These laws were supposed to be drawn from the practice, but still more from the theory, of the ancients. . . . At its best, it confirmed and maintained permanent standards of good writing; at its worst it was a mere sequence of precepts. In general, French criticism was more theoretic, and as in La Harpe, more desiccated" (3.754).

32. In the 1928 preface to the second edition of *The Sacred Wood* (1920), TSE observes: "the problem appearing in these essays, which gives them what coherence they have, is the problem of the integrity of poetry, with the repeated assertion that when we are considering poetry we must consider it primarily as poetry and not another thing" (3.413).

Lecture IV

Wordsworth and Coleridge[1]

December 9th, 1932

It is natural, and in so rapid and superficial a review as this inevitable, to consider the criticism of Wordsworth and of Coleridge together. But we must keep in mind how very different were not only the men themselves, but the circumstances and motives of the composition of their principal critical statements. Wordsworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* was written while he was still in his youth, and while his poetic genius still had much to do; Coleridge wrote the *Biographia Literaria* much later in life, when poetry, except for that one brief and touching lament for lost youth, had deserted him, and when the disastrous effects of long dissipation and stupefaction of his powers in transcendental metaphysics were bringing him to a state of lethargy.[2] With the relation of Coleridge's thought to subsequent theological and political development I am not here concerned. The *Biographia* is our principal document; and in connexion with that there is one piece of his formal verse which in its passionate self-revelation rises almost to the height of great poetry. I mean "Dejection: an Ode."[3]

> There was a time when, though my path was rough,
>   This joy within me dallied with distress,
> And all misfortunes were but as the stuff
>   Whence Fancy made me dreams of happiness:
> For hope grew round me, like the twining vine,
> And fruits, and foliage, not my own, seemed mine.
> But now afflictions bow me down to earth:
> Nor care I that they rob me of my mirth;
>   But oh! each visitation
> Suspends what nature gave me at my birth,
>   My shaping spirit of Imagination.
> For not to think of what I needs must feel,
>   But to be still and patient, all I can;
> And haply by abstruse research to steal
>   From my own nature all the natural man –

This was my sole resource, my only plan:
Till that which suits a part infects the whole,
And now is almost grown the habit of my soul.[4]

This ode was written by April 4th, 1802: the *Biographia Literaria* were not published for fifteen years after that.[5] The lines strike my ear as one of the saddest of confessions that I have ever read. When I spoke of Coleridge as drugging himself with metaphysics I was thinking seriously of these his own words: "haply by abstruse research to steal from my own nature all the natural man."[6] Coleridge was one of those unhappy persons – Donne, I suspect, was such another[7] – of whom one might say, that if they had not been poets, they might have made something of their lives, might even have had a career; or conversely, that if they had not been interested in so many things, crossed by such diverse passions, they might have been great poets. It was better for Coleridge, as poet, to read books of travel and exploration than to read books of metaphysics and political economy. He did genuinely want to read books of metaphysics and political economy, for he had a certain talent for such subjects. But for a few years he had been visited by the Muse (I know of no poet to whom this hackneyed metaphor is better applicable) and thenceforth was a haunted man; for anyone who has ever been visited by the Muse is thenceforth haunted. He had no vocation for the religious life, for there again somebody like a Muse, or a much higher being, is to be invoked; he was condemned to know that the little poetry he had written was worth more than all he could do with the rest of his life. The author of *Biographia Literaria* was already a ruined man. Sometimes, however, to be a "ruined man" is itself a vocation.

Wordsworth, on the other hand, wrote his "Preface," as I have said, while in the plenitude of his poetic powers and while his reputation was still only sustained by readers of discernment. And he was of an opposite poetic type to Coleridge. Whether the bulk of his genuine poetic achievement is so much greater than Coleridge's as it appears, is uncertain. Whether his power and inspiration remained with him to the end is, alas, not even doubtful. But Wordsworth had no ghastly shadows at his back, no Eumenides to pursue him; or if he did, he gave no sign and took no notice; and he went droning on the still sad music of infirmity to the verge of the grave.[8] His inspiration never having been of that sudden, fitful and terrifying kind that visited Coleridge, he was never, apparently, troubled by the consciousness of having lost it. As André Gide's Prometheus said, in the lecture which he gave before a large audience in Paris: *Il faut avoir un aigle*.[9] Coleridge remained in contact with his eagle. Neither in detail of life and interest were the two men similar – Wordsworth indifferent to books, Coleridge the voracious reader. But they had that in common which was more important than all differences: they were the two most original poetic minds of their generation. Their influence upon each other was considerable; though probably the influence of Wordsworth upon Coleridge, during their brief period of intimate association, was greater than that of Coleridge upon Wordsworth.[10] This reciprocal influence would hardly have been possible to such a degree without another influence which held the two men together, and affected both of them more deeply than either knew, the influence of a great woman. No woman has ever played so important a part in the lives of two poets at once – I mean their poetic lives – as did Dorothy Wordsworth.[11]

The emphasis upon the differences of mind, temperament and character of the two men must be all the greater because their critical statements must be read together. In some respects there is of course, as would be expected, a conscious difference of opinion. Wordsworth wrote his "Preface" to defend his own manner of writing poetry, and Coleridge wrote the *Biographia* to defend Wordsworth's poetry; or in part he did. I must confine myself to two points. One is Coleridge's doctrine of fancy and imagination; the other is that on which Coleridge and Wordsworth made common cause: their new theory of poetic diction.

Let me take up the latter point first. In this matter of poetic diction, it is at first very hard to understand what all the fuss is about. Wordsworth's poems had met with no worse reception than verse of such novelty is accustomed to receive. I myself can remember a time when some question of "poetic diction" was in the air; when Ezra Pound issued his statement that "poetry ought to be as well written as prose"; and when he and I and our colleagues were mentioned by a writer in *The Morning Post* as "literary Bolsheviks" and by Mr. Arthur Waugh (with a point which has always escaped me) as "drunken helots."[12] But I think that we believed that we were affirming forgotten standards, rather than setting up new idols. Wordsworth, when he said that his purpose was "to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men,"[13] was only saying in other words what Dryden had said, and fighting the battle which Dryden had fought; and Mr. Garrod, in calling attention to this fact, seems to me intemperate in asserting that Dryden had never made real to himself "two vital considerations: first, that such language must express passion, and secondly, that it must base itself in just observation."[14] Dryden among the shades might meditate upon Mr. Garrod's conception of passion and observation. And on the other hand, as has also been pointed out, first by Coleridge himself in the *Biographia*, Wordsworth by no means worried himself to excess in observing his own principles. "The language of the middle and lower classes of society"[15*] is of course perfectly proper when you are representing dramatically the *speech* of these classes, and then no other language is proper; similarly when you are representing dramatically the language of the upper classes; but on other occasions, it is not the business of the poet to talk like *any* class of society, but like himself – rather better, we hope, than any actual class; though when any class of society happens to have the best word, phrase or expletive for anything, then the poet is entitled to it. As for the current style of writing when the *Lyrical Ballads* appeared, it was what any style of writing becomes when it falls into the hands of people who cannot even be called mediocrities. True, Gray was overrated: but then Johnson had come down on Gray with a deadlier force than Wordsworth could exert.[16] And Donne has seemed to us, in recent years, as striking a peculiarly conversational style; but did Wordsworth or Coleridge acclaim Donne? No, when it came to Donne – and Cowley – you will find that Wordsworth and Coleridge were led by the nose by Samuel Johnson; they were just as eighteenth century as anybody; except that where the eighteenth century spoke of lack of elegance the Lake poets found lack of passion.[17] And much of the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge is just as turgid and artificial and elegant as any eighteenth century die-hard could wish. What then was all the fuss about?

There really was something to make a fuss about. I do not know whether Professor Garrod has grasped it, but if so he seems to ignore it; Professor Harper,[18*] however, seems to have it by the right lug. There is a remarkable letter of Wordsworth's in 1801 which he wrote to Charles James Fox in sending him a copy of the *Ballads*. You will find a long extract from this letter in Professor Harper's book. I quote one sentence. In commending his poems to the fashionable politician's attention Wordsworth says:

> Recently by the spreading of manufactures through every part of the country, by the heavy taxes upon postage, by workhouses, houses of industry, and the invention of soup shops, etc., superadded to the increasing disproportion between the price of labour and that of the

> necessaries of life, the bonds of domestic feeling among the poor, as far as the influence of these things has extended, have been weakened, and in innumerable instances entirely destroyed.[19]

Wordsworth then proceeds to expound a doctrine which nowadays is called distributism.[20] And Wordsworth was not merely taking advantage of an opportunity to lecture a rather disreputable statesman and rouse him to useful activity; he was seriously explaining the content and purpose of his poems: without this preamble Mr. Fox could hardly be expected to make head or tail of the Idiot Boy or the sailor's parrot.[21] You may say that this public spirit is irrelevant to Wordsworth's greatest poems; nevertheless I believe that you will understand a great poem like "Resolution and Independence" better if you understand the purposes and social passions which animated its author; and unless you understand these you will misread Wordsworth's literary criticism entirely.[22] Incidentally, those who speak of Wordsworth as the original Lost Leader (a reference which Browning, as I remember, denied) should make pause and consider that when a man takes politics and social affairs seriously the difference between revolution and reaction may be by the breadth of a hair, and that Wordsworth may possibly have been no renegade but a man who thought, so far as he thought at all, for himself.[23] But it is Wordsworth's social interest that inspires his own novelty of form in verse, and backs up his explicit remarks upon poetic diction; and it is really this social interest which (consciously or not) the fuss was all about. It was not so much from lack of thought as from warmth of feeling that Wordsworth originally wrote the words "the language of conversation in the middle and lower classes of society."[24] It was not from any recantation of political principles, but from having had it brought to his attention that, as a general literary principle, this would never do, that he altered them. Where he wrote "my purpose was to imitate, and, as far as is possible, to adopt the very language of men" he was saying what no serious critic could disapprove.

Except on this point of diction, and that of "[choosing] incidents and situations from common life,"[25] Wordsworth is a most orthodox critic. It is true that he uses the word "enthusiasm" which the eighteenth century did not like, but in the matter of mimesis he is more deeply Aristotelian than some who have aimed at following Aristotle more closely. He says of the poet:

> To these qualities he has added a disposition to be affected more than other men by absent things as if they were present; an ability of conjuring

> up in himself passions, which are indeed far from being the same as those produced by real events, yet (especially in those parts of the general sympathy which are pleasing and delightful) do more nearly resemble the passions produced by real events, than anything which, from the motions of their own minds merely, other men are accustomed to feel in themselves.[26]

Here is the new version of Imitation, and I think that it is the best so far:

> Aristotle, I have been told, has said, that Poetry is the most philosophic of all writing; it is so: its object is truth, not individual and local, but general, and operative.[27]

I find that "it is so" very exhilarating. For my part, rather than be parrotted by a hundred generations, I had rather be neglected and have one man eventually come to my conclusions and say "there is an old author who found this out before I did."

When you find Wordsworth as the seer and prophet whose function it is to instruct and edify through pleasure, as if this were something he had found out for himself, you may begin to think that there is something in it, at least for some kinds of poetry. Some portions of this enthusiasm I believe Wordsworth communicated to Coleridge. But Wordsworth's revolutionary faith was more vital to him than it was to Coleridge. You cannot say that it inspired his revolution in poetry, but it cannot be disentangled from the motives of his poetry. Any radical change in poetic form is likely to be the symptom of some very much deeper change in society and in the individual. I doubt whether the impulse in Coleridge would have been strong enough to have worked its way out, but for the example and encouragement of Wordsworth. I would not be understood as affirming that revolutionary enthusiasm is the best parent for poetry, or as justifying revolution on the ground that it will lead to an outburst of poetry – which would be a wasteful, and hardly justifiable way of producing poetry. Nor am I indulging in sociological criticism, which has to suppress so much of the data, and which is ignorant of so much of the rest. I only affirm that all human affairs are involved with each other, that consequently all history involves abstraction, and that in attempting to win a full understanding of the poetry of a period you are led to the consideration of subjects which at first sight appear to have little bearing upon poetry. These subjects have accordingly a good deal to do with the criticism of poetry; and it is such subjects which make intelligible Wordsworth's inability to appreciate Pope, and the irrelevance of the metaphysical poets to the interest which he and Coleridge had at heart.[28]

With the foregoing observations in mind, let me turn to consider the great importance, in the *Biographia Literaria*, of the distinction between Fancy and Imagination already touched upon, and of the definition of Imagination given in a later passage. "Repeated meditations led me first to suspect . . . that fancy and imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or, at furthest, the lower and higher degrees of one and the same power."[29] In Chapter XIII he draws the following important distinctions:

> The IMAGINATION, then, I consider either as primary or secondary. The Primary Imagination I hold to be the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM. The Secondary I consider as an echo of the former, co-existing with the conscious will, yet still as identical with the primary in the *kind* of its agency, and differing only in *degree*, and in the *mode* of its operation. It dissolves, diffuses, dissipates, in order to recreate; or where this process is rendered impossible, yet still at all events it struggles to idealize and to unify. It is essentially *vital*, even as all objects (*as* objects) are essentially fixed and dead.
>
> FANCY, on the contrary, has no other counters to play with, but fixities and definites. The Fancy is, indeed, no other than a mode of Memory emancipated from the order of time and space, and blended with, and modified by, that empirical phenomenon of the will which we express by the word Choice. But, equally with the ordinary memory, it must receive all its materials ready made from the law of association. [172-73]

I have read some of Hegel and Fichte, as well as Hartley (who turns up at any moment with Coleridge), and forgotten it; of Schelling I am entirely ignorant at first hand, and he is one of those numerous authors whom, the longer you leave them unread, the less desire you have to read.[30] Hence it may be that I wholly fail to appreciate this passage. My mind is too heavy and concrete for any flight of abstruse reasoning. If, as I have already suggested, the difference between imagination and fancy amounts in practice to no more than the difference between good and bad poetry, have we done more than take a turn round Robin Hood's barn?[31] It is only if fancy can be an ingredient in good poetry, and if you can show some good poetry which is the better for it; it is only if the distinction illuminates our immediate preference of one poet over another, that it can be of use to a practical mind like mine. Fancy may be "no other than a mode of memory emancipated from the order of space and time"; but it seems unwise to talk of memory in connexion with fancy and omit it altogether from the account of imagination. As we have learnt from Dr. Lowes's *Road to Xanadu* (if we did not know it already) memory plays a very great part in imagination, and of course a much larger part than can be proved by that book; Professor Lowes had only literary reminiscences to deal with, and they are the only kind of reminiscence which can be fully traced and identified: but how much more of memory enters into creation than only our reading! Mr. Lowes has, I think, demonstrated the importance of instinctive and unconscious, as well as deliberate selection.[32] Coleridge's taste, at one period of life, led him first to read voraciously in a certain type of book, and then to select and store up certain kinds of imagery from those books.[33]* And I should say that the mind of any poet would be magnetised in its own way, to select automatically, in his reading (from picture papers and cheap novels, indeed, as well as serious books, and least likely from works of an abstract nature, though even these are aliment for some poetic minds) the material – an image, a phrase, a word – which may be of use to him later. And this selection probably runs through the whole of his sensitive life. There might be the experience of a child of ten, a small boy peering through sea-water in a rock-pool, and finding a sea-anemone for the first time: the simple experience (not so simple, for an exceptional child, as it looks) might he dormant in his mind for twenty years, and re-appear transformed in some verse-context charged with great imaginative pressure.[34] There is so much memory in imagination that if you are to distinguish between imagination and fancy in Coleridge's way you must define the difference between memory in imagination and memory in fancy; and it is not enough to say that the one "dissolves, diffuses and dissipates" the memories in order to re-create, whilst the other deals with "fixities and definites." This distinction, in itself, need not give you distinct imagination and fancy, but only degrees of imaginative success. It would seem from Mr. Richards's note[35]* that he is almost as much baffled by the passage which I have quoted, or at least by part of it, as I am. You have to forget all about Coleridge's fancy to learn anything from him about imagination – as with Addison[36] – but from Coleridge there is a good deal to learn. I quote another passage, in the form in which Mr. Richards has abbreviated it:

> that synthetic and magical power, to which we have exclusively appropriated the name of imagination . . . reveals itself in the balance or reconciliation of opposite or discordant qualities . . . the sense of novelty and freshness, with old and familiar objects; a more than usual state of emotion, with more than usual order; judgment, ever awake, and steady self-possession, with enthusiasm and feeling profound or vehement. . . . the sense of musical delight . . . with the power of reducing multitude into unity[37†] of effect, and modifying a series of thoughts by some one predominant thought or feeling. [179, 180, 182]

What such descriptions are worth, from the point of view of psychological criticism of to-day, can best be learnt from Mr. Richards's book from which I have quoted them.[38] What is my concern here is a less profound matter, the place of Wordsworth and Coleridge in the historical process of criticism. You will have observed in the passage just quoted a richness and depth, an awareness of complication which takes it far out of the range of Dryden. This is not simply because Coleridge thought more profoundly than Dryden, though he did. Nor am I sure that Coleridge learned so much from German philosophers, or earlier from Hartley, as he thought he did; what is best in his criticism seems to come from his own delicacy and subtlety of insight as he reflected upon his own experience of writing poetry. Of the two poets as critics, it was Wordsworth who knew better what he was about: his critical insight, in this one "Preface" and the "Supplement," is enough to give him the highest place.[39] I do not assign him this position because he cared about the revival of agriculture and the relation of production and consumption, though such interests are symptomatic; there is, in his poetry and in his "Preface," a profound spiritual revival, an inspiration communicated rather to Pusey and Newman, to Ruskin, and to the great humanitarians, than to the accredited poets of the next age. Coleridge, with his authority due to his great reading, probably did much more than Wordsworth to bring attention to the profundity of the philosophic problems into which the study of poetry may take us. And the two men together need no third with them to illustrate the mind of an age of conscious change. It is not merely that they were interested in a variety of speculative subjects and of practical matters of importance for their time, but that their interests were involved in each other: and the first faint sign of such complication appeared when Addison derived his theory of imagination in the arts from the theories of Locke. In Wordsworth and Coleridge we find not merely a variety of interests, even of passionate interests; it is all one passion expressed through them all: poetry was for them the expression of a totality of unified interests.

I have tried to exhibit the criticism of Dryden and of Johnson, in this very brief review, in its appropriateness to their periods of history, periods when there was, for the purpose of literary determination, a *stasis*. And to exhibit that of Wordsworth and Coleridge as the criticism of an age of change. Even if it be true that change is always making ready, underneath, during a stable period, and that a period of change contains within itself the elements of limitation which will bring it to a halt, yet some stabilisations are more deeply founded than others. It is with Matthew Arnold that we come to a period of apparent stabilisation which was shallow and premature.

NOTE TO CHAPTER IV
ON MR. HERBERT READ'S APPRAISAL OF THE POETRY OF WORDSWORTH[40]

There is a view of English poetry, already of some antiquity, which considers the main line of English poetry from Milton to Wordsworth, or from perhaps even before Milton, as an unfortunate interlude during which the English muse was, if not beside herself, at least not in possession of her faculties. I am sorry to find this view, which was largely Wordsworth's own, re-stated and confirmed by Mr. Herbert Read. Mr. Read is one of a few contemporaries, like Mr. Richards, with whom I almost never feel quite happy in disagreeing; but when, in his admirable small essay, *Form in Modern Poetry*, he writes as follows, I can only exclaim, "What are we coming to?":

> the main tradition of English poetry . . . begins with Chaucer and reaches its final culmination in Shakespeare. It is contradicted by most French poetry before Baudelaire, by the so-called classical phase of English poetry culminating in Alexander Pope, and by the late Poet Laureate [Robert Bridges]. It was re-established in England by Wordsworth and Coleridge, developed in some degree by Browning and Gerard Manley Hopkins, and in our own day by poets like Wilfred Owen, Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot.[41]

To some extent I am in agreement; that is, I dare say that my valuation of the earlier poets, poet for poet, would approximate closely enough to

Mr. Read's; and my admiration for the late Poet Laureate is as moderate as his, though I suspect a slight wilfulness in bringing him into this context.[42] But I observe first that Mr. Read goes Wordsworth one better and excludes Milton; and when a poet has done as big a job as Milton, is it helpful to suggest that he has just been up a blind alley? And is Blake too minor a poet to count? As for French poetry, Mr. Read saves the situation with the qualification "most," so that I suppose Baudelaire's master Racine just squeaks in.[43] And is it not arbitrary to assert that the "classical phase" of English poetry (if we are to employ that term at all) culminates in Pope? Surely Johnson belongs to it, and, with a touch of sentimentalism and even mawkishness, Gray and Collins; and where would Landor be but for the classical tradition? I hasten to add Mr. Read's next remark: "The distinction is not merely that between 'classical' and 'romantic.' This division cuts across in a different direction" [42]. I think that I understand this qualification, and if I understand I agree; nevertheless Mr. Read seems to have been using the term "classical" in two different meanings. Mr. Read's divisions are too clear-cut to leave my mind at ease. He considers that the poetic process of a mind like Dryden's and that of a mind like Wordsworth's are essentially diverse; and he says roundly of Dryden's art, "Such art is not poetry" [42]. Now I cannot see why Dryden's and Wordsworth's minds should have worked any more differently from each other than those of any other two poets. I do not believe that any two poets' minds work quite in the same way, so far as we can know enough about the matter for "working" to mean anything at all; I do not believe that even the same poet's mind need work in the same way in two different but equally good poems; but there must also be something in common in the poetic process of all poets' minds. Mr. Read quotes, in support of his contention, a passage from the *Annus Mirabilis* which I have not given:

> The composition of all poems is or ought to be, of wit; and wit in the Poet, or *Wit writing* (if you will give me leave to use a school-distinction), is no other than the faculty of imagination in the writer, which, like a nimble spaniel, beats over and ranges through the field of memory, till it springs the quarry it hunted after; or, without metaphor, which searches over all the memory for the species or ideas of those things which it designs to represent. *Wit written* is that which is well defined, the happy result of thought or product of imagination.[44]

I should have thought this merely a happy description, in the language available at Dryden's time, and at a less profound level of insight than that of Coleridge or Wordsworth at their best, of the same sort of process that the latter were attempting to describe in language nearer to our own. But Mr. Read says No, what Dryden is talking about is something different: it is *wit written*, not poetry.[45] Mr. Read seems to me to have fallen into the error which I mentioned in the text, of thinking that Dryden is only talking of his own kind of poetic composition, and that he was quite incapable of appreciating Chaucer and Shakespeare. Yet all that I myself have to go upon, in the end, is the kind of enjoyment that I get from Dryden's poetry.

The difference of opinion might be put in a metaphor. In reviewing English poetry, Mr. Read seems to charge himself with the task of casting out devils – though less drastically than Mr. Pound, who leaves nothing but a room well swept and not garnished. What I see, in the history of English poetry, is not so much daemonic possession as the splitting up of personality. If we say that one of these partial personalities which may develop in a national mind is that which manifested itself in the period between Dryden and Johnson, then what we have to do is to re-integrate it: otherwise we are likely to get only successive alternations of personality. Surely the great poet is, among other things, one who not merely restores a tradition which has been in abeyance, but one who in his poetry re-twines as many straying strands of tradition as possible. Nor can you isolate poetry from everything else in the history of a people; and it is rather strong to suggest that the English mind has been deranged ever since the time of Shakespeare, and that only recently have a few fitful rays of reason penetrated its darkness. If the malady is as chronic as that, it is pretty well beyond cure.

NOTES

1. This lecture was advertised on 28 Oct 1932 as "The Theories of Coleridge and Wordsworth."

2. Wordsworth prefixed a brief "Advertisement" to the first edition of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798. Following frequent conversations with Coleridge, Wordsworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* was first published in the second edition of 1800; it was enlarged in the third edition of 1802. Coleridge wrote *Biographia Literaria* in 1815, partly as a response to Wordsworth's preface; it was first published in 1817. In "Experiment in Criticism" (1929), TSE described *Biographia Literaria* as "one of the wisest and silliest, the most exciting and most exasperating books of criticism ever written" (3.755).

3. In a catalog description that TSE wrote on 7 Mar 1934 for the National Portrait Gallery, London, TSE remarked of Coleridge: "His life was ill-regulated: weak, slothful, a voracious reader, he contracted an unhappy marriage and much later the habit of taking laudanum.

Described his own character in his great *Ode to Dejection* (1802). The greatest English literary critic, he was also the greatest intellectual force of his time." This characterization of Coleridge is now printed on an NPG portrait postcard of Coleridge.

4. "Dejection: An Ode" (1817), stanza VI. *The Poetical Works of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. with a biographical introduction by James Dykes Campbell, vol 1 (London: Macmillan, 1907), 284-85. TSE owned this edition.

5. The earliest manuscript version is a verse-letter to Sara Hutchinson dated 4 Apr 1802; it was substantially revised and published in the *Morning Post* of 4 Oct. The ode was further revised for publication in *Sibylline Leaves* (1817).

6. These lines were marked in TSE's personal copy of Coleridge's *Poetical Works*. In "Dryden the Poet" (1931), TSE observes that, in his criticism, Coleridge "disappears in metaphysic clouds" (4.272).

7. TSE alludes to "Whispers of Immortality" (1918): "Donne, I suppose, was such another" (*CPP* 52).

8. Eumenides: In Greek mythology the Eumenides or Erinyes (Ερινύες, "the avengers") are female underworld deities of vengeance, corresponding to the Furies in Roman mythology. TSE drew on the representation of the Euminedes by Aeschylus in *Orestes* and Sophocles in *Oedipus at Colonus* in *The Family Reunion* (1939).

TSE alludes to line 91 – "The still, sad music of humanity" – from Wordsworth's "Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" (1798). *The Complete Poetical Works of William Wordsworth* (London: Edward Moxon, 1869), 160.

9. "Il faut avoir un aigle" [It is necessary to have an eagle] from Gide's Paris lecture "'Parabolique' du *Prométhée mal enchaîné*." In Gide's satirical novel *Le Prométhée mal enchaîné* (1899), translated by Lilian Rothermere in 1919 as *Prometheus Illbound*, Prometheus enters a Parisian café and shows fellow customers the eagle eating his liver.

10. Wordsworth and Coleridge spent twelve months in each other's company as near neighbors in Somerset in 1797-98. Together they would plan, write, and publish *Lyrical Ballads*.

11. Dorothy Wordsworth (1771-1855), poet and diarist. Her posthumously published *Journals* (1897) contain portraits of literary figures and describe long walks with her brother in the Lake District. Wordsworth's poetry drew freely on his sister's observations of natural landscapes.

12. "Poetry must be *as well written as prose*." Ezra Pound, letter to Harriet Monroe Jan 1915, *The Selected Letters of Ezra Pound: 1907-1941*, ed. D. D. Paige (London: Faber, 1951), 48. E. B. Osborn numbered TSE among the "literary Bolsheviks" in "Certain American Poets: The Bolshevist Touch," *Morning Post* (28 May 1920), 4. Arthur Waugh's review of Pound's *Catholic Anthology* likened this poetry to the exhibitionism of a "drunken slave" or helot in ancient Sparta. "The New Poetry," *Quarterly Review*, 226 (Oct 1916), 386. Pound titled his response to Waugh, "Drunken Helots and Mr. Eliot," *Egoist* (June 1917), 72-74.

13. The edition of the 1850 text of "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads* used by TSE has not been identified; the page and line citations are thus to the standard edition of *The Prose Works of William Wordsworth*, ed. W. J. B. Owen and Jane Worthington Smyser, vol 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1974); here 131, lines 191-92.

14. H. W. Garrod, *Wordsworth: Lectures and Essays* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1923), 153. In his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1924, TSE observes of Garrod's inaugural lecture as Oxford professor of poetry: "his remarks on the derivation of the philosophy of Wordsworth,

Coleridge, and Shelley from Hartley are exactly of the sort that make historical criticism valuable" (2.529). Garrod was a predecessor as Norton lecturer (1929-30).

15*. TSE's note: "What was Wordsworth's conception of the language of the upper classes of society?"

16. In his "Life of Gray" (1781), Johnson was critical of an element of artificiality in Gray's poetry, complaining that his odes "are marked by glittering accumulations of ungraceful ornaments" and "the language is laboured into harshness" (*Lives* 501). Wordsworth's "Preface" attacks the diction of a sonnet by Gray.

17. TSE was possibly unaware at this time that Coleridge recorded his praise of Donne's poetry in his notebooks for 1795-1804 and that, on 2 May 1811, he wrote a note in Charles Lamb's copy of Donne's poems: "to read Donne you must measure *Time*, and discover the *Time* of each word by the sense of Passion" (*Notes Theological, Political, and Miscellaneous*, London: Edward Moxon, 1853, 249). In 1833, Wordsworth recommended to Alexander Dyce that he include Donne's holy sonnet "Death be not proud" in his anthology *Specimens of English Sonnets*. In "To Criticize the Critic" (1961), TSE revised his opinion, noting Coleridge "admired Donne" (*TCC* 21).

18*. TSE's note: "In his Life of Wordsworth." George McLean Harper (1863-1947), since 1926 Woodrow Wilson Professor of Literature, Princeton University, author of *William Wordsworth: His Life, Works, and Influence*, 2 vols (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916).

19. Wordsworth to Charles James Fox, 14 Jan 1801. Quoted in Harper, *William Wordsworth*, vol 2 (329-30).

20. distributive (OED): "Of, pertaining to, or designating a political system or state in which personal property is owned by the largest possible number of people." See TSE's discussion of "the Belloc-Chesterton gospel of Distributive Property" in "Political Theorists" (3.139).

21. In "Charles Whibley" (1931), TSE praises Whibley's lively portrait of Charles James Fox's disreputable gambling qualities and places him among Whibley's portraits of political "ragamuffins." (4.387). TSE refers to "The Idiot Boy" (1798), a long narrative poem telling the story of Betty Foy's mentally disabled son, and "The Sailor's Mother" (1800) in which a begging mother reveals the songbird of her deceased sailor son.

22. "Resolution and Independence" (1807) recounts the poet's encounter with a leech-gatherer. The poem was composed in the summer of 1802; its reflections on the restorative powers of the imagination have been read as a response to Coleridge's "Dejection: An Ode" of that year.

23. TSE refers to Browning's poem "The Lost Leader" (1845), which berates a leader who has abandoned the liberal cause. The poem was widely seen as an attack on Wordsworth. In response to inquiries, Browning stopped short of saying it was directly addressed to Wordsworth.

24. "Advertisement" (1798), *Lyrical Ballads 1798*, ed. Harold Littledale (London: Henry Frowde, 1911), xxvii.

25. *Prose Works*, 123, lines 81-82

26. *Prose Works*, 138, lines 328-36

27. *Prose Works*, 139, lines 377-80

28. In a contemporary portrait of Wordsworth, William Hazlitt wrote: "It is mortifying to hear him speak of Pope and Dryden, whom, because they have been supposed to have all the possible excellences of poetry, he will allow to have none." *The Spirit of the Age; or, Contemporary*

Portraits (London: Henry Colburn, 1825), 201-02. Wordsworth disputed Hazlitt's characterization of his views in marginal comments on his copy of *The Spirit of the Age*.

29. *Biographia Literaria; or, Biographical Sketches of my Literary Life and Opinions* (Boston: Crocker and Brewer, 1834), 56; subsequent page references are from this edition.

30. TSE read Fichte and Hegel during the writing of his doctoral dissertation on F. H. Bradley. Friedrich Wilhelm Joseph von Schelling (1775-1854), German philosopher in the idealist tradition: Fichte was his mentor and Hegel was his university roommate, friend, and later rival.

31. Idiomatic phrase meaning the long way around; a roundabout or circuitous route; in reference to Robin Hood, the legendary outlaw, whose "barn" was the fields and pastures surrounding Sherwood Forest.

32. John Livingston Lowes's *The Road to Xanadu: A Study in the Ways of the Imagination* (1927) draws on Coleridge's notebooks and papers in a study of his sources: Lowes compiled a list of Coleridge's reading before and during the composition of "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Kubla Khan" and attempted to demonstrate the presence of this reading in the poetry's ideas and imagery.

33*. TSE's note: "And by a right appreciation. The circumstances of early exploration might well stimulate the imaginations of those who endeavoured to set down precisely what they had seen in such a way as to convey an accurate impression to Europeans who had no experience of anything similar. They would often, naturally, stimulate the imagination beyond the perception, but it is usually the accurate images, the fidelity of which may still be recognised, that are the most telling."

34. See, eight years later, TSE's "The Dry Salvages" (1941): "The pools where it offers to our curiosity / The more delicate algae and the sea anemone" (*CPP* 184).

35*. TSE's note: "*Principles of Literary Criticism*, p. 191." After quoting Coleridge on the primary imagination, Richards's note continues: "The luminous hints dropped by Coleridge in the neighbourhood of this sentence would seem to have dazzled succeeding spectators. How otherwise explain why they have been overlooked" (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1926), 191 n.1.

36. TSE discusses Addison's *Spectator* essays on the imagination in his previous Norton lecture "The Age of Dryden."

37†. Both the 1933 and 1964 texts read "variety of effect"; Richards quotes Coleridge correctly.

38. In chapter 32 of *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Richards presents a psychological account of "The Imagination" (the quotations from Coleridge appear on page 242). Richards responded to what he perceived as TSE's misunderstanding of his comments in a full-length study, *Coleridge on Imagination* (1934).

39. Wordsworth added an "Appendix" and "Essay, Supplementary to the Preface" to the 1802 edition of *Lyrical Ballads*.

40. On 13 Sept 1930, TSE wrote to Bonamy Dobrée to express his opinion of the book publication of Read's 1929 Clark lectures on Wordsworth: "The book is excellent, the views just; but I did not feel that he was deeply enough moved by the subject to justify it. His remark that criticism should be written like philosophy does not worry me, because it does not seem to me to mean much: there are so many ways in which *good* philosophical works have been written. The danger is chiefly of writing criticism like second rate philosophy" (*L5* 317).

41. *Form in Modern Poetry* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932), 41. In a letter to Herbert Read [n.d. ca. 1933] Arthur Wheen, a member of TSE's *Criterion* Group, noted that *Form in Modern Poetry* represented "A definite breach with Eliot!" (Victoria).

42. On 6 Dec 1929, TSE consulted Read about a *Criterion* review of Bridges's *The Testament of Beauty* (1929). TSE agreed with Read's view that the poem was interesting as an experiment but ultimately a failure. TSE offers his obituary comments on "The Place of Robert Bridges" in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for July 1930 (4.141).

43. In "The Metaphysical Poets" (1921), TSE says that Racine and Baudelaire "are in some ways more like each other than they are like anyone else" (2.382).

44. "The Proper Wit of Poetry" (1666), *Dryden's Dramatic Poesy and Other Essays* (London: Dent, 1912), 192.

45. Read observes: "The real distinction is between the poetic process as I have defined it, and a process adequately described by Dryden as *wit-writing*. . . . I think Wordsworth was the first poet to be fully conscious of the difference between poetry and wit-writing" (*Form in Modern Poetry*, 42, 43).

Lecture V

Shelley and Keats

February 17th, 1933

It would appear that the revolution effected by Wordsworth was very far-reaching indeed. He was not the first poet to present himself as the inspired prophet, nor indeed is this quite Wordsworth's case. Blake may have pretended, and with some claim, to have penetrated mysteries of heaven and hell, but no claim that Blake might make seems to descend upon the "poet" in general; Blake simply had the visions, and made use of poetry to set them forth.[1] Scott, and Byron in his more popular works, were merely society entertainers. Wordsworth is really the first, in the unsettled state of affairs in his time, to annex new authority for the poet, to meddle with social affairs, and to offer a new kind of religious sentiment which it seemed the peculiar prerogative of the poet to interpret. Since Matthew Arnold made his Selections from Wordsworth's poetry, it has become a commonplace to observe that Wordsworth's true greatness as poet is independent of his opinions, of his theory of diction or of his nature-philosophy, and that it is found in poems in which he has no ulterior motive whatever.[2] I am not sure that this critical eclecticism cannot go too far; that we can judge and enjoy a man's poetry while leaving wholly out of account all of the things for which he cared deeply, and on behalf of which he turned his poetry to account. If we dismiss Wordsworth's interests and beliefs, just how much, I wonder, remains? To retain them, or to keep them in mind instead of deliberately extruding them in preparation for enjoying his poetry, is that not necessary to appreciate how great a poet Wordsworth really is? Consider, for instance, one of the very finest poets of the first part of the nineteenth century: Landor. He is an undoubted master of verse and prose; he is the author of at least one long poem which deserves to be much more read than it is; but his reputation has never been such as to bring him into comparison with Wordsworth or with either of the younger poets with whom we have now to deal.[3] It is not only by reason of a handful of poems or a number of isolated lines expressive of deeper emotion than that of which Landor was capable, that we give Wordsworth his place; there is something integral about such greatness, and something significant in his place in the pattern of history, with which we have to reckon. And in estimating for ourselves the greatness of a poet we have to take into account also the *history* of his greatness. Wordsworth is an essential part of history; Landor only a magnificent by-product.

Shelley both had views about poetry and made use of poetry for expressing views. With Shelley we are struck from the beginning by the number of things poetry is expected to do; from a poet who tells us, in a note on vegetarianism, that "the orang-outang perfectly resembles man both in the order and number of his teeth," we shall not know what not to expect.[4] The notes to *Queen Mab* express, it is true, only the views of an intelligent and enthusiastic schoolboy, but a schoolboy who knows how to write; and throughout his work, which is of no small bulk for a short life, he does not, I think, let us forget that he took his ideas seriously. The ideas of Shelley seem to me always to be ideas of adolescence – as there is every reason why they should be. And an enthusiasm for Shelley seems to me also to be an affair of adolescence: for most of us, Shelley has marked an intense period before maturity, but for how many does Shelley remain the companion of age?[5] I confess that I never open the volume of his poems simply because I want to read poetry, but only with some special reason for reference. I find his ideas repellent; and the difficulty of separating Shelley from his ideas and beliefs is still greater than with Wordsworth. And the biographical interest which Shelley has always excited makes it difficult to read the poetry without remembering the man: and the man was humourless, pedantic, self-centred, and sometimes almost a blackguard. Except for an occasional flash of shrewd sense, when he is speaking of someone else and not concerned with his own affairs or with fine writing, his letters are insufferably dull. He makes an astonishing contrast with the attractive Keats. On the other hand, I admit that Wordsworth does not present a very pleasing personality either; yet I not only enjoy his poetry as I cannot enjoy Shelley's, but I enjoy it more than when I first read it. I can only fumble (abating my prejudices as best I can) for reasons why Shelley's abuse of poetry does me more violence than Wordsworth's.

Shelley seems to have had to a high degree the unusual faculty of passionate apprehension of abstract ideas. Whether he was not sometimes confused about his own feelings, as we may be tempted to believe when confounded by the philosophy of *Epipsychidion*, is another matter.[6] I do not mean that Shelley had a metaphysical or philosophical mind; his mind was in some ways a very confused one: he was able to be at once and with the same enthusiasm an eighteenth-century rationalist and a cloudy Platonist. But abstractions could excite in him strong emotion. His views remained pretty fixed, though his poetic gift matured. It is open to us to guess whether his mind would have matured too; certainly, in his last, and to my mind greatest though unfinished poem, "The Triumph of Life," there is evidence not only of better writing than in any previous long poem, but of greater wisdom:

> That what I thought was an old root which grew
> To strange distortion out of the hillside,
> Was indeed one of those deluded crew;
>
> And that the grass, which methought hung so wide
> And white, was but his thin discoloured hair;
> And that the holes he vainly sought to hide,
> Were or had been eyes . . .[7†]

There is a precision of image and an economy here that is new to Shelley. But so far as we can judge, he never quite escaped from the tutelage of Godwin, even when he saw through the humbug as a man; and the weight of Mrs. Shelley must have been pretty heavy too.[8] And, taking his work as it is, and without vain conjectures about the future, we may ask: is it possible to ignore the "ideas" in Shelley's poems, so as to be able to enjoy the poetry?

Mr. I. A. Richards deserves the credit of having done the pioneer work in the problem of Belief in the enjoyment of poetry; and any methodical pursuit of the problem I must leave to him and to those who are qualified after him.[9] But Shelley raises the question in another form than that in which it presented itself to me in a note on the subject which I appended to an essay on Dante.[10] There, I was concerned with two hypothetical readers, one of whom accepts the philosophy of the poet, and the other of whom rejects it; and so long as the poets in question were such as Dante and Lucretius, this seemed to cover the matter. I am not a Buddhist, but some of the early Buddhist scriptures affect me as parts of the Old Testament do; I can still enjoy FitzGerald's *Omar*, though I do not hold that rather smart and shallow view of life.[11] But some of Shelley's views I positively dislike, and that hampers my enjoyment of the poems in which they occur; and others seem to me so puerile that I cannot enjoy the poems in which they occur. And I do not find it possible to skip these passages and satisfy myself with the poetry in which no proposition pushes itself forward to claim assent. What complicates the problem still further is that in poetry so fluent as Shelley's there is a good deal which is just bad jingling. The following, for instance:

> On a battle-trumpet's blast
> I fled hither, fast, fast, fast,
> 'Mid the darkness upward cast.
> From the dust of creeds outworn,
> From the tyrant's banner torn,
> Gathering round me, onward borne,
> There was mingled many a cry –
> Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory![12]

Walter Scott seldom fell as low as this, though Byron more often. But in such lines, harsh and untunable, one is all the more affronted by the ideas, the ideas which Shelley bolted whole and never assimilated, visible in the catchwords of creeds outworn, tyrants and priests, which Shelley employed with such reiteration. And the bad parts of a poem can contaminate the whole, so that when Shelley rises to the heights, at the end of the poem:

> To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
> To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
>   To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
> To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
> From its own wreck the thing it contemplates . . .[13]

lines to the content of which belief is neither given nor denied, we are unable to enjoy them fully. One does not expect a poem to be equally sustained throughout; and in some of the most successful long poems there is a relation of the more tense to the more relaxed passages, which is itself part of the pattern of beauty. But good lines amongst bad can never give more than a regretful pleasure. In reading *Epipsychidion* I am thoroughly gravelled by lines like:

> True love in this differs from gold and clay,
> That to divide is not to take away . . .
> I never was attached to that great sect,
> Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
> Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,

> And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
> To cold oblivion . . .[14†]

so that when I come, a few lines later, upon a lovely image like:

> A vision like incarnate April, warning,
> With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
> Into his summer grave.[15]

I am as much shocked at finding it in such indifferent company as pleased by finding it at all. And we must admit that Shelley's finest long poems, as well as some of his worst, are those in which he took his ideas very seriously.[16*] It was these ideas that blew the "fading coal" to life; no more than with Wordsworth, can we ignore them without getting something no more Shelley's poetry than a wax effigy would be Shelley.[17]

Shelley said that he disliked didactic poetry; but his own poetry is chiefly didactic, though (in fairness) not exactly in the sense in which he was using that word. Shelley's professed view of poetry is not dissimilar to that of Wordsworth. The language in which he clothes it in the "Defence of Poetry" is very magniloquent, and with the exception of the magnificent image which Joyce quotes somewhere in *Ulysses* ("the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness")[18] it seems to me an inferior piece of writing to Wordsworth's great preface. He says other fine things too; but the following is more significant of the way in which he relates poetry to the social activity of the age:

> The most unfailing herald, companion and follower of the awakening of a great people to work a beneficial change in opinion or institution, is poetry. At such periods there is an accumulation of the power of communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature. The persons in whom this power resides may often, so far as regards many portions of their nature, have little apparent correspondence with that spirit of good of which they are the ministers. But even whilst they deny and abjure, they are yet compelled to serve, the power which is seated on the throne of their own soul. [46]

I know not whether Shelley had in mind, in his reservations about "the persons in whom this power resides," the defects of Byron or those of Wordsworth; he is hardly likely to have been contemplating his own. But this is a statement, and is either true or false. If he is suggesting that great poetry always tends to accompany a popular "change in opinion or institution," that we know to be false. Whether at such periods the power of "communicating and receiving intense and impassioned conceptions respecting man and nature" accumulates is doubtful; one would expect people to be too busy in other ways. Shelley does not appear, in this passage, to imply that poetry itself helps to operate these changes, and accumulate this power, nor does he assert that poetry is a usual by-product of change of these kinds; but he does affirm some relation between the two; and in consequence, a particular relation between his own poetry and the events of his own time; from which it would follow that the two throw light upon each other. This is perhaps the first appearance of the kinetic or revolutionary theory of poetry; for Wordsworth did not generalise to this point.

We may now return to the question how far it is possible to enjoy Shelley's poetry without approving the use to which he put it; that is, without sharing his views and sympathies. Dante, of course, was about as thoroughgoing a didacticist as one could find; and I have maintained elsewhere, and still maintain, that it is not essential to share Dante's beliefs in order to enjoy his poetry.[19*] If in this instance I may appear to be extending the tolerance of a biassed mind, the example of Lucretius will do as well: one may share the essential beliefs of Dante and yet enjoy Lucretius to the full. Why then should this general indemnity not extend to Wordsworth and to Shelley? Here Mr. Richards comes very patly to our help:[20*]

> Coleridge, when he remarked that a 'willing suspension of disbelief' accompanied much poetry, was noting an important fact, but not quite in the happiest terms, for we are neither aware of a disbelief nor voluntarily suspending it in these cases. It is better to say that the question of belief or disbelief, in the intellectual sense, never arises when we are reading well. If unfortunately it does arise, either through the poet's fault or our own, we have for the moment ceased to be reading and have become astronomers, or theologians, or moralists, persons engaged in quite a different type of activity.

We may be permitted to infer, in so far as the distaste of a person like myself for Shelley's poetry is not attributable to irrelevant prejudices or to a simple blind spot, but is due to a peculiarity in the poetry and not in the reader, that it is not the presentation of beliefs which I do not hold, or – to put the case as extremely as possible – of beliefs that excite my abhorrence, that makes the difficulty.[21] Still less is it that Shelley is deliberately making use of his poetic gifts to propagate a doctrine; for Dante and Lucretius did the same thing. I suggest that the position is somewhat as follows. When the doctrine, theory, belief, or "view of life" presented in a poem is one which the mind of the reader can accept as coherent, mature, and founded on the facts of experience, it interposes no obstacle to the reader's enjoyment, whether it be one that he accept or deny, approve or deprecate. When it is one which the reader rejects as childish or feeble, it may, for a reader of well-developed mind, set up an almost complete check. I observe in passing that we may distinguish, but without precision, between poets who employ their verbal, rhythmic and imaginative gift in the service of ideas which they hold passionately, and poets who employ the ideas which they hold with more or less settled conviction as material for a poem; poets may vary indefinitely between these two hypothetical extremes, and at what point we place any particular poet must remain incapable of exact calculation.[22] And I am inclined to think that the reason why I was intoxicated by Shelley's poetry at the age of fifteen, and now find it almost unreadable, is not so much that at that age I accepted his ideas, and have since come to reject them, as that at that age "the question of belief or disbelief," as Mr. Richards puts it, did not arise. It is not so much that thirty years ago I was able to read Shelley under an illusion which experience has dissipated, as that because the question of belief or disbelief did not arise I was in a much better position to enjoy the poetry. I can only regret that Shelley did not live to put his poetic gifts, which were certainly of the first order, at the service of more tenable beliefs – which need not have been, for my purposes, beliefs more acceptable to me.

There is, however, more to the problem than that. I was struck by a sentence in Mr. Aldous Huxley's Introduction to D. H. Lawrence's Letters. "How bitterly," he says of Lawrence, "he loathed the Wilhelm-Meisterish view of love as an education, as a means to culture, a Sandow-exerciser for the soul!"[23] Precisely; Lawrence in my opinion was right; but that view runs through the work of Goethe, and if you dislike it, what are you going to do about Goethe?[24] Does "culture" require that we make (what Lawrence never did, and I respect him for it) a deliberate effort to put out of mind all our convictions and passionate beliefs about life when we sit down to read poetry? If so, so much the worse for culture. Nor, on the other hand, may we distinguish, as people sometimes do, between the occasions on which a particular poet is "being a poet" and the occasions on which he is "being a preacher." That is too facile. If you attempt to edit Shelley, or Wordsworth or Goethe in this way, there is no one point at which you must stop rather than another, and what you get in the end by this process is something which is not Shelley, or Wordsworth or Goethe at all, but a mere unrelated heap of charming stanzas, the debris of poetry rather than the poetry itself: And by using, or abusing, this principle of isolation you are in danger of seeking from poetry some illusory *pure* enjoyment, of separating poetry from everything else in the world, and cheating yourself out of a great deal that poetry has to give to your development.

Some years ago I tried to make the point, in a paper on Shakespeare, that Dante possessed a "philosophy" in a sense in which Shakespeare held none, or none of any importance.[25] I have reason to believe that I did not succeed in making the point clear at all. Surely, people say, Shakespeare held a "philosophy," even though it cannot be formulated; surely our reading of Shakespeare gives us a deeper and wider understanding of life and death. And although I was anxious not to give such an impression, I seem to have given some readers to think that I was thereby estimating the poetry of Shakespeare as of less value than Dante's. People tend to believe that there is just some one essence of poetry, for which we can find the formula, and that poets can be ranged according to their possession of a greater or less quantity of this essence. Dante and Lucretius expounded explicit philosophies, as Shakespeare did not.[26] This simple distinction is very clear, but not necessarily highly important. What is important is what distinguishes all of these poets from such poets as Wordsworth, Shelley and Goethe. And here again I think that Mr. Richards can throw some light on the matter.

I believe that for a poet to be also a philosopher he would have to be virtually two men; I cannot think of any example of this thorough schizophrenia, nor can I see anything to be gained by it: the work is better performed inside two skulls than one. Coleridge is the apparent example, but I believe that he was only able to exercise the one activity at the expense of the other. A poet may borrow a philosophy or he may do without one. It is when he philosophises upon his own *poetic* insight that he is apt to go wrong. A great deal of the weakness of modern poetry is accounted for in a few pages of Mr. Richards's short essay, *Science and Poetry*; and although he has there D. H. Lawrence under specific examination, a good deal of what he says applies to the Romantic generation as well. "To distinguish," he says, "an intuition *of* an emotion from an intuition *by* it is not always easy."[27] I believe that Wordsworth was inclined to the same error of which Mr. Richards finds Lawrence guilty. The case of Shelley is rather different: he borrowed ideas – which, as I have said, is perfectly legitimate – but he borrowed shabby ones, and when he had got them he muddled them up with his own intuitions. Of Goethe perhaps it is truer to say that he dabbled in both philosophy and poetry and made no great success of either; his true role was that of the man of the world and sage – a La Rochefoucauld, a La Bruyère, a Vauvenargues.[28]

On the other hand, I should consider it a false simplification to present any of these poets, or Lawrence of whom Mr. Richards was speaking, simply as a case of *individual error*, and leave it at that. It is not a wilful paradox to assert that the greatness of each of these writers is indissolubly attached to his practice of the error, of his own specific variation of the error. Their place in history, their importance for their own and subsequent generations, is involved in it; this is not a purely personal matter. They would not have been as great as they were but for the limitations which prevented them from being greater than they were. They belong with the numbers of the great heretics of all times.[29] This gives them a significance quite other than that of Keats, a singular figure in a varied and remarkable period.

Keats seems to me also a great poet. I am not happy about *Hyperion*: it contains great lines, but I do not know whether it is a great poem. The Odes – especially perhaps the "Ode to Psyche" – are enough for his reputation.[30] But I am not so much concerned with the degree of his greatness as with its kind; and its kind is manifested more clearly in his Letters than in his poems; and in contrast with the kinds we have been reviewing, it seems to me to be much more the kind of Shakespeare.[31]* The Letters are certainly the most notable and the most important ever written by any English poet.[32] Keats's egotism, such as it is, is that of youth which time would have redeemed. His letters are what letters ought to be; the fine things come in unexpectedly, neither introduced nor shown out, but between trifle and trifle.[33] His observations suggested by Wordsworth's "Gypsey," in a letter to Bailey of 1817, are of the finest quality of criticism, and the deepest penetration:

> it seems to me that if Wordsworth had thought a little deeper at that moment, he would not have written the poem at all. I should judge it to have been written in one of the most comfortable moods of his life – it is a kind of sketchy intellectual landscape, not a search for truth.[34]

And in a letter to the same correspondent a few days later he says:

> In passing, however, I must say one thing that has pressed upon me lately, and increased my Humility and capability of submission – and that is this truth – Men of Genius are great as certain ethereal chemicals operating on the Mass of neutral intellect – but they have not any individuality, any determined character – I would call the top and head of those who have a proper self, Men of Power.[35]*

This is the sort of remark, which, when made by a man so young as was Keats, can only be called the result of genius.[36] There is hardly one statement of Keats about poetry, which, when considered carefully and with due allowance for the difficulties of communication, will not be found to be true; and what is more, true for greater and more mature poetry than anything that Keats ever wrote.

But I am being tempted into a descant upon the general brilliance and profundity of the observations scattered through Keats's letters, and should probably be tempted further into remarking upon their merit as models of correspondence (not that one should ever take a model in letter-writing) and their revelation of a charming personality. My design, in this very narrow frame, has been only to refer to them as evidence of a very different kind of poetic mind than any of those I have just been considering. Keats's sayings about poetry, thrown out in the course of private correspondence, keep pretty close to intuition; and they have no apparent bearing upon his own times, as he himself does not appear to have taken any absorbing interest in public affairs – though when he did turn to such matters, he brought to bear a shrewd and penetrating intellect. Wordsworth had a very delicate sensibility to social life and social changes. Wordsworth and Shelley both theorise. Keats has no theory, and to have formed one was irrelevant to his interests, and alien to his mind. If we take either Wordsworth or Shelley as representative of his age, as being a voice of the age, we cannot so take Keats. But we cannot accuse Keats of any withdrawal, or refusal; he was merely about his business. He had no theories, yet in the sense appropriate to the poet, in the same sense, though to a lesser degree than Shakespeare, he had a "philosophic" mind. He was occupied only with the highest use of poetry; but that does not imply that poets of other types may not rightly and sometimes by obligation be concerned about the other uses.

NOTES

1. In "The Mysticism of Blake" (1927), TSE discusses Blake's prose poem *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (1793) and concludes that "Blake was not even a first-rate visionary: his visions have a certain illiteracy" (3.241).

2. Matthew Arnold's Preface to *Poems of Wordsworth* (1879) contends, contrary to the claims of "Wordsworthians," that "we cannot do him justice until we dismiss his formal philosophy." *Essays in Criticism: Second Series* (London: Macmillan, 1888), 149.

3. TSE refers to Landor's "Oriental" epic *Gebir*, published in 1798 (the same year as Coleridge and Wordsworth's *Lyrical Ballads*), considered in his next Norton lecture "Matthew Arnold" (4.655).

4. From *A Vindication of Natural Diet: Being One in a Series of Notes to Queen Mab: A Philosophical Poem*, first published in 1813. *Prose Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol 10 (London: Reeves and Turner, 1880), 10.

5. In his introductory Norton lecture, TSE remarks of his reading after the age of the fourteen: "I took the usual adolescent course with Byron, Shelley, Keats, Rossetti, Swinburne" (4.592). On 10 July 1919, TSE thanked his mother on receipt of his books from America, including "a copy of Shelley's poems" purchased with money his father had given him for winning a school Latin prize (*L1* 376).

6. *Epipsychidion* (1821) is a meditation on the nature of ideal love addressed to Teresa Viviani, whom Shelley met while she was confined by her family in a convent near Pisa, Italy, in 1820. In *Epipsychidion* Shelley advocates free love, criticizing the restrictions of conventional marriage.

7†. First line, 1933, 1963, incorrectly: "Then what . . . that grew"; "The Triumph of Life" (1824) lines 182-88 (*The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, ed. George E. Woodbury (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1901), 474. In "What Dante Means to Me" (1950), TSE quotes this passage from Shelley's last poem – unfinished before his death in 1822, where the narrator meets the shade of Rousseau – stating that Shelley's mind is here "inspired to some of the greatest and most Dantesque lines in English" and recalling that these lines "made an indelible impression upon me over forty-five years ago" (*TCC* 130-31).

8. Godwin was the father of Shelley's wife, Mary. TSE recommended H. N. Brailsford's *Shelley, Godwin and their Circle* (1913) to students of his 1916 Extension classes on "Modern French Literature" (1.476).

9. The final chapter of Richards's *Principles of Literary Criticism* (1924) addresses the issue of "Poetry and Beliefs," a theme that was taken up again in *Science and Poetry* (1926). TSE's repeated criticisms (see Introduction to Volume 3) prompted Richards to prepare in Feb 1929 a lengthy set of "Notes on Belief-Problems" for discussion with TSE.

10. TSE refers to his "Note to Section II" in "Dante" (1929) where he tackles Richards's theory of poetic belief (3.727)

11. TSE studied Buddhist scriptures in Pali under Charles Rockwell Lanman at Harvard in 1912-13, and in 1913-14, he attended a course entitled "Schools of the Religions and Philosophical Thought of Japan, as compared with those of China and India," given by Masaharu Anesaki, a visiting professor at Harvard. In his introductory Norton lecture TSE recalled: "I happened to pick up a copy of FitzGerald's *Omar* which was lying about, and the almost overwhelming introduction to a new world of feeling which this poem was the occasion of giving me" (4.591).

12. *Prometheus Unbound* (1820), Act 1, lines 696-705 (*Complete Poetical Works*, 176). These words are spoken to Prometheus by the first of a chorus of spirits.

13. From Demogorgon's closing speech, Act 4, lines 570-74 (*Complete Poetical Works*, 206). Unlike Aeschylus' version of the myth, in Shelley's "Lyrical Drama in Four Acts" a tyrannical Jupiter is overthrown and Prometheus released.

14†. In 1933: incorrectly "dross and clay"; *Epipsychidion*, lines 160-61; 149-53 (*Complete Poetical Works*, 301).

15. In fact, these lines (121-23) appear slightly earlier in *Epipsychidion* (*Complete Poetical Works*, 300).

16*. TSE's note: "He did not, for instance, appear to take his ideas very seriously in *The Witch of Atlas*, which, with all its charm, I think we may dismiss as a trifle." *The Witch of Atlas* (1824) is a playful fantasy poem dedicated to Mary Shelley: "On her objecting to the following poem upon the score of its containing no human interest" (*Complete Poetical Works*, 272).

17. TSE refers to Shelley's "A Defence of Poetry" (1840): "for the mind in creation is as a fading coal, which some invisible influence, like an inconstant wind, awakens to transitory brightness; this power arises from within, like the color of a flower which fades and changes as it is developed, and the conscious portions of our natures are unprophetic either of its approach or its departure." *A Defense of Poetry*, ed. Albert S. Cook (New York: Ginn and Company, 1890), 39. Further references are given in the text from this edition.

18. In the "Scylla and Charybdis" section of *Ulysses*, Joyce writes: 'In the intense instant of imagination, when the mind, Shelley says, is a fading coal, that which I was is that which I am and that which in possibility I may come to be." *Ulysses* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company, 1926), 186. Joyce also refers to this passage in chapter 5 of *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

19*. TSE's note: "Mr. A. E. Housman has affirmed (*The Name and Nature of Poetry*, p. 34) that 'good religious poetry, whether in Keble or Dante or Job, is likely to be most justly appreciated and most discriminatingly relished by the undevout.' There is a hard atom of truth in this, but if taken literally it would end in nonsense." TSE read the publication of Housman's Leslie Stephen lecture, *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (Cambridge UP, 1933), after his return to the UK and reviewed it for the Oct issue of the *Criterion* (4.557). John Keble (1792–1866), Church of England clergyman and poet, was a leading member of the Oxford Movement.

20*. TSE's note: "*Practical Criticism*, p. 277." Coleridge's remarks on the "willing suspension of disbelief . . . which constitutes poetic faith" appear in chapter 14 of *Biographia Literaria or Biographical Sketches of My Literary Life and Opinions* (Boston: Crocker and Brewster, 1834), 174.

21. TSE is responding to Richards's remarks on "irrelevant associations and stock responses" in chapter 5 of *Practical Criticism* (London: Kegan Paul, 1929), 235-45.

22. TSE's remarks on poetry and belief develop the position articulated in "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930), which contains reflections on the belief of Lucretius, Dante, and Shelley (4.20).

23. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Aldous Huxley (New York: Viking, 1932), xiii. TSE's copy of this edition is inscribed Jan 1933. German strongman Eugen Sandow (1867-1925) developed a popular system of bodybuilding exercises. On 2 Oct 1935, TSE wrote jokingly to Polly Tandy that her husband, Geoffrey, the *Criterion*'s broadcasting chronicler, displayed "envy for my vast size and superior development by the Sandow System."

24. In "The Romantic Generation, If It Existed" (1919), TSE comments: "Whatever our opinion of Goethe's permanence as an artist, there is no doubt whatever about his permanence as a representative, as the articulate voice of forty years" (2.79).

25. TSE refers to "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (1927), in which he contends: "The difference between Shakespeare and Dante is that Dante had one coherent system of thought behind him; but that was just his luck, and from the point of view of poetry is an irrelevant accident" (3.252).

26. TSE reiterates a point of view first encountered in George Santayana's *Three Philosophical Poets: Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe* (1910).

27. *Science and Poetry* (New York: Norton, 1926), 91.

28. Jean de La Bruyère (1645-96), French philosopher and moralist, author of *Les Caractères* (1688), a series of character sketches, containing maxims, literary criticism, and ethical reflection.

29. In his Page-Barbour lectures of May 1933, TSE describes Lawrence as "an almost perfect example of the heretic" (*ASG* 38).

30. *Hyperion* (1820) tells of the despair of the Titans after their defeat by the Olympians. Keats began the poem in late 1818 but had abandoned it by Apr 1819 after losing faith in its Miltonic high style. Its epic themes and ideas were taken up in *The Fall of Hyperion: A Dream* (1820). In "A Note on Richard Crashaw" (1928), TSE observes "nothing that Crashaw wrote has the *promise* that is patent in *Hyperion* or *The Triumph of Life*" (3.380). "Ode to Psyche" was composed in Apr 1819, the earliest of his sequence of great odes written in 1819, which include "Ode to a Nightingale," "Ode on a Grecian Urn," "Ode on Melancholy," "Ode on Indolence," and "To Autumn."

31*. TSE's note: "I have not read Mr. Murry's *Keats and Shakespeare*: perhaps I say no more than Mr. Murry has said better and more exhaustively in that book. I am sure that he has meditated the matter much more deeply than I have." In Aug 1925, TSE assured Murry that he would read his personal copy of *Keats and Shakespeare* (*L2* 722), the title of Murry's Clark Lectures earlier that year.

32. On 23 Feb, TSE delivered a lecture at Yale University on "English Poets as Letter Writers," with a focus on Keats and Lawrence (4.846).

33. TSE echoes Keats's letter to J. H. Reynolds of 3 May 1818, in which he writes: "We read fine things but never feel them to the full until we have gone the same steps as the Author." *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains, of John Keats*, ed. Richard Monckton Milnes (New York: George P. Putnam, 1848), 97.

34. Undated letter (ca. Nov 1817) from Keats to Benjamin Bailey. *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains*, 57. Wordsworth's untitled poem ("The Grison gypsey here her tent has plac't") appeared in *Descriptive Sketches* (1793).

35*. TSE's note: "Mr. Herbert Read quotes this passage in his *Form in Modern Poetry*, but pursues his speculations to a point to which I would not willingly follow him." Letter to Benjamin Bailey, 22 Nov 1817, *Life, Letters, and Literary Remains, of John Keats*, 53. Read quotes this letter in *Form in Modern Poetry* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1932), 37, as support for his distinction between "personality" and "character," which TSE cites in his "Appendix" on heresy (*ASG* 67).

36. Keats was aged twenty-one when he wrote this letter.

Lecture VI

Matthew Arnold[1]

March 3rd, 1933

"The rise of the democracy to power in America and Europe is not, as has been hoped, to be a safeguard of peace and civilization. It is the rise of the uncivilized, whom no school education can suffice to provide with intelligence and reason. It looks as if the world were entering upon a new stage of experience, unlike anything heretofore, in which there must be a new discipline of suffering to fit men for the new conditions."

I have quoted the foregoing words, partly because they are by Norton[2*] and partly because they are not by Arnold. The first two sentences might well be Arnold's. But the third – "a new stage of experience, unlike anything heretofore, in which there must be a new discipline of suffering": these words are not only not Arnold's, but we know at once that they could not have been written by him. Arnold hardly looks ahead to the new stage of experience; and though he speaks to us of discipline, it is the discipline of culture, not the discipline of suffering. Arnold represents a period of stasis; of relative and precarious stability, it is true, a brief halt in the endless march of humanity in some, or in any direction. Arnold is neither a reactionary nor a revolutionary; he marks a period of time, as do Dryden and Johnson before him.

Even if the delight we get from Arnold's writings, prose and verse, be moderate, yet he is in some respects the most satisfactory man of letters of his age. You remember the famous judgement which he pronounced upon the poets of the epoch which I have just been considering; a judgement which, at its time, must have appeared startlingly independent. "The English poetry of the first quarter of this century," he says in his essay on "The Function of Criticism," "with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, did not know enough."[3] We should be right too, I think, if we added that Carlyle, Ruskin, Tennyson, Browning, with plenty of energy, plenty of creative force, had not enough wisdom. Their culture was not always well-rounded; their knowledge of the human soul was often partial and often shallow. Arnold was not a man of vast or exact scholarship, and he had neither walked in hell nor been rapt to heaven; but what he did know, of books and men, was in its way well-balanced and well-marshalled. After the prophetic frensies of the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century, he seems to come to us saying: "This poetry is very fine, it is opulent and careless, it is sometimes profound, it is highly original; but you will never establish and maintain a tradition if you go on in this haphazard way. There are minor virtues which have flourished better at other times and in other countries: these you must give heed to, these you must apply, in your poetry, in your prose, in your conversation and your way of living; else you condemn yourselves to enjoy only fitful and transient bursts of literary brilliance, and you will never, as a people, a nation, a race, have a fully formed tradition and personality." However well-nourished we may be on previous literature and previous culture, we cannot afford to neglect Arnold.

I have elsewhere tried to point out some of Arnold's weaknesses when he ventured into departments of thought for which his mind was unsuited and ill-equipped. In philosophy and theology he was an undergraduate; in religion a Philistine.[4] It is a pleasanter task to define a man's limitations within the field in which he is qualified; for there, the definition of limitation may be at the same time a precision of the writer's excellences. Arnold's poetry has little technical interest. It is academic poetry in the best sense; the best fruit which can issue from the promise shown by the prize-poem.[5] When he is not simply being himself, he is most at ease in a master's gown: *Empedocles on Etna* is one of the finest academic poems ever written. He tried other robes which became him less well; I cannot but think of *Tristram and Iseult* and "The Forsaken Merman" as charades. *Sohrab and Rustum* is a fine piece, but less fine than *Gebir*; and in the classical line Landor, with a finer ear, can beat Arnold every time.[6] But Arnold is a poet to whom one readily returns. It is a pleasure, certainly, after associating with the riff-raff of the early part of the century, to be in the company of a man *qui sait se conduire*;[7] but Arnold is something more than an agreeable Professor of Poetry. With all his fastidiousness and superciliousness and officiality, Arnold is more intimate with us than Browning, more intimate than Tennyson ever is except at moments, as in the passionate flights in *In Memoriam*. He is the poet and critic of a period of false stability. All his writing in the kind of *Literature and Dogma* seems to me a valiant attempt to dodge the issue, to mediate between Newman and Huxley; but his poetry, the best of it, is too honest to employ any but his genuine feelings of unrest, loneliness and dissatisfaction.[8] Some of his limitations are manifest enough. In his essay on "The Study of Poetry" he has several paragraphs on Burns, and for an Englishman and an Englishman of his time, Arnold understands Burns very well. Perhaps I have a partiality for small oppressive nationalities like the Scots that makes Arnold's patronising manner irritate me; and certainly I suspect Arnold of helping to fix the wholly mistaken notion of Burns as a singular untutored English dialect poet, instead of as a decadent representative of a great alien tradition. But he says (taking occasion to rebuke the country in which Burns lived) that "no one can deny that it is of advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world"; and this remark strikes me as betraying a limitation.[9] It is an advantage to mankind in general to live in a beautiful world; that no one can doubt. But for the poet is it so important? We mean all sorts of things, I know, by Beauty. But the essential advantage for a poet is not, to have a beautiful world with which to deal: it is to be able to see beneath both beauty and ugliness; to see the boredom, and the horror, and the glory.[10]

The vision of the horror and the glory was denied to Arnold, but he knew something of the boredom. He speaks much of the "consolatory" power of Wordsworth's poetry, and it is in connexion with Wordsworth that he makes many of his wisest observations about poetry.

> But where will Europe's latter hour
> Again find Wordsworth's healing power?
> Others will teach us how to dare,
> And against fear our breast to steel:
> Others will strengthen us to bear –
> But who, ah! who, will make us feel?
> The cloud of mortal destiny,
> Others will front it fearlessly –
> But who, like him, will put it by?[11]*

His tone is always of regret, of loss of faith, instability, nostalgia:

> And love, if love, of happier men.
> Of happier men – for they, at least,
> Have *dreamed* two human hearts might blend
> In one, and were through faith released
> From isolation without end
> Prolonged, nor knew, although no less
> Alone than thou, their loneliness.[12]

This is a familiar enough sentiment; and perhaps a more robust comment on the situation is, that if you don't like it, you can get on with it; and the verse itself is not highly distinguished. Marguerite, at best, is a shadowy figure, neither very passionately desired nor very closely observed, a mere pretext for lamentation.[13] His personal emotion is indeed most convincing when he deals with an impersonal subject. And when we know his poetry, we are not surprised that in his criticism he tells us little or nothing about his experience of writing it, and that he is so little concerned with poetry from the maker's point of view. One feels that the writing of poetry brought him little of that excitement, that joyful loss of self in the workmanship of art, that intense and transitory relief which comes at the moment of completion and is the chief reward of creative work. As we can forget, in reading his criticism, that he is a poet himself, so it is all the more necessary to remind ourselves that his creative and his critical writings are essentially the work of the same man. The same weakness, the same necessity for something to depend upon, which make him an academic poet make him an academic critic.

From time to time, every hundred years or so, it is desirable that some critic shall appear to review the past of our literature, and set the poets and the poems in a new order. This task is not one of revolution but of readjustment. What we observe is partly the same scene, but in a different and more distant perspective; there are new and strange objects in the foreground, to be drawn accurately in proportion to the more familiar ones which now approach the horizon, where all but the most eminent become invisible to the naked eye. The exhaustive critic, armed with a powerful glass, will be able to sweep the distance and gain an acquaintance with minute objects in the landscape with which to compare minute objects close at hand; he will be able to gauge nicely the position and proportion of the objects surrounding us, in the whole of the vast panorama. This metaphorical fancy only represents the ideal; but Dryden, Johnson and Arnold have each performed the task as well as human frailty will allow. The majority of critics can be expected only to parrot the opinions of the last master of criticism; among more independent minds a period of destruction, of preposterous over-estimation, and of successive fashions takes place, until a new authority comes to introduce some order. And it is not merely the passage of time and accumulation of new artistic experience, nor the ineradicable tendency of the great majority of men to repeat the opinions of those few who have taken the trouble to think, nor the tendency of a nimble but myopic minority to progenerate heterodoxies, that makes new assessments necessary. It is that no generation is interested in Art in quite the same way as any other; each generation, like each individual, brings to the contemplation of art its own categories of appreciation, makes its own demands upon art, and has its own uses for art. "Pure" artistic appreciation is to my thinking only an ideal, when not merely a figment, and must be, so long as the appreciation of art is an affair of limited and transient human beings existing in space and time.[14] Both artist and audience are limited. There is for each time, for each artist, a kind of alloy required to make the metal workable into art; and each generation prefers its own alloy to any other. Hence each new master of criticism performs a useful service merely by the fact that his errors are of a different kind from the last; and the longer the sequence of critics we have, the greater amount of correction is possible.

It was desirable after the surprising, varied and abundant contribution of the Romantic Period that this task of criticism should be undertaken again. Nothing that was done in this period was of the nature of what Arnold was able to do, because that was not the time in which it could be done. Coleridge, Lamb, Hazlitt, De Quincey, did work of great importance upon Shakespeare and the Elizabethan dramatists, and discovered new treasure which they left for others to calculate.[15] The instruments of Arnold's time appear now, of course, very antiquated: his was the epoch of Ward's *English Poets*, and of *The Golden Treasury*, birthday albums and calendars with a poetical quotation for each day.[16] Arnold was not Dryden or Johnson; he was an Inspector of Schools and he became Professor of Poetry.[17] He was an educator. The valuation of the Romantic poets, in academic circles, is still very largely that which Arnold made. It was right, it was just, it was necessary for its time; and of course it had its defects. It is tinged by his own uncertainty, his own apprehensions, his own view of what it was best that his own time should believe; and it is very much influenced by his religious attitude. His taste is not comprehensive. He seems to have chosen, when he could – for much of his work is occasional – those subjects in connexion with which he could best express his views about morals and society: Wordsworth – perhaps not quite as Wordsworth would have recognised himself – Heine, Amiel, Guérin.[18] He was capable of learning from France and from Germany. But the *use* to which he put poetry was limited; he wrote about poets when they provided a pretext for his sermon to the British public; and he was apt to think of the greatness of poetry rather than of its genuineness.

There is no poetry which Arnold experienced more deeply than that of Wordsworth; the lines which I quoted above are not so much a criticism of Wordsworth as a testimonial of what Wordsworth had done for *him*. We may expect to find in the essay on Wordsworth, if anywhere, a statement of what poetry meant to Arnold. It is in his essay on Wordsworth that occurs his famous definition: "Poetry is at bottom a criticism of life."[19] At bottom: that is a great way down; the bottom is the bottom. At the bottom of the abyss is what few ever see, and what those cannot bear to look at for long; and it is not a "criticism of life." If we mean life as a whole – not that Arnold ever saw life as a whole – from top to bottom, can anything that we can say of it ultimately, of that awful mystery, be called criticism? We bring back very little from our rare descents, and that is not criticism. Arnold might just as well have said that Christian worship is at bottom a criticism of the Trinity. We see better what Arnold's words amount to when we recognise that his own poetry is decidedly critical poetry. A poem like "Heine's Grave" is criticism, and very fine criticism too; and a kind of criticism which is justified because it could not be made in prose.[20] Sometimes Arnold's criticism is on a lower level:

One morn as through Hyde Park we walked,
My friend and I, by chance we talked,
Of Lessing's famed Laocoön;[21]*

The poem about Heine is good poetry for the same reason that it is good criticism: because Heine is one of the *personae*, the masks, behind which Arnold is able to go through his performance. The reason why some criticism is good (I do not care to generalise here about all criticism) is that the critic assumes, in a way, the personality of the author whom he criticises, and through this personality is able to speak with his own voice. Arnold's Wordsworth is as much like Arnold as he is like Wordsworth. Sometimes a critic may choose an author to criticise, a role to assume, as far as possible the antithesis to himself, a personality which has actualised all that has been suppressed in himself; we can sometimes arrive at a very satisfactory intimacy with our anti-masks.[22]

"The greatness of a poet," Arnold goes on to say, "lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life" [144]. Not a happy way of putting it, as if ideas were a lotion for the inflamed skin of suffering humanity. But it seems to be what Arnold thought he was doing. He presently qualifies this assertion by pointing out that "morals" must not be interpreted too narrowly:

> Morals are often treated in a narrow and false fashion; they are bound up with systems of thought and belief which have had their day; they are

> fallen into the hands of pedants and professional dealers; they grow tiresome to some of us. [144]

Alas! for morals as Arnold conceived them; they are grown still more tiresome. He then remarks significantly in speaking of the "Wordsworthians":

> The Wordsworthians are apt to praise him for the wrong things, and to lay far too much stress upon what they call his philosophy. His poetry is the reality, his philosophy – so far, at least, as it may put on the form and habit of a "scientific system of thought," and the more that it puts them on – is the illusion. Perhaps we shall one day learn to make this proposition general, and to say: Poetry is the reality, philosophy the illusion. [148-49]

This seems to me a striking, dangerous and subversive assertion. Poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; yet philosophy is illusion; the reality is the criticism of life. Arnold might have read Lessing's famed Laocoön with a view to disentangling his own confusions.

We must remember that for Arnold, as for everyone else, "poetry" meant a particular selection and order of poets. It meant, as for everyone else, the poetry that he liked, that he re-read; when we come to the point of making a statement about poetry, it is the poetry that sticks in our minds that weights that statement. And at the same time we notice that Arnold has come to an opinion about poetry different from that of any of his predecessors. For Wordsworth and for Shelley poetry was a vehicle for one kind of philosophy or another, but the philosophy was something believed in.[23] For Arnold the best poetry supersedes both religion and philosophy. I have tried to indicate the results of this conjuring trick elsewhere.[24]* The most generalised form of my own view is simply this: that nothing in this world or the next is a substitute for anything else; and if you find that you must do without something, such as religious faith or philosophic belief, then you must just do without it. I can persuade myself, I find, that some of the things that I can hope to get are better worth having than some of the things I cannot get; or I may hope to alter myself so as to want different things; but I cannot persuade myself that it is the same desires that are satisfied, or that I have in effect the same thing under a different name.

A French friend said of the late York Powell of Oxford: "*Il était aussi tranquille dans son manque de foi que le mystique dans sa croyance.*"[25] You could not say that of Arnold; his charm and his interest are largely due to the painful position that he occupied between faith and disbelief. Like many people the vanishing of whose religious faith has left behind only habits, he placed an exaggerated emphasis upon morals. Such people often confuse morals with their own good habits, the result of a sensible upbringing, prudence, and the absence of any very powerful temptation; but I do not speak of Arnold or of any particular person, for only God knows. Morals for the saint are only a preliminary matter; for the poet a secondary matter. How Arnold finds morals in poetry is not clear. He tells us that:

> A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against *life*; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards *life* [144]

but the statement left in suspension, and without Arnold's illustrating it by examples of poetic revolt and poetic indifference, seems to have little value. A little later he tells us why Wordsworth is great:

> Wordsworth's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Wordsworth feels the joy offered to us in nature, the joy offered to us in the simple primary affections and duties; and because of the extraordinary power with which, in case after case, he shows us this joy, and renders it so as to make us share it. [153]

It is not clear whether "the simple primary affections and duties" (whatever they are, and however distinguished from the secondary and the complex) is meant to be an expansion of "nature," or another joy superadded: I rather think the latter, and take "nature" to mean the Lake District. I am not, furthermore, sure of the meaning of the conjunction of two quite different reasons for Wordsworth's greatness: one being the power with which Wordsworth *feels* the joy of nature, the other the power by which he makes us *share* it. In any case, it is definitely a communication theory, as any theory of the poet as teacher, leader, or priest is bound to be. One way of testing it is to ask why other poets are great. Can we say that Shakespeare's poetry is great because of the extraordinary power with which Shakespeare feels estimable feelings, and because of the extraordinary power with which he makes us share them? I enjoy Shakespeare's poetry to the full extent of my capacity for enjoying poetry; but I have not the slightest approach to certainty that I share Shakespeare's feelings; nor am I very much concerned to know whether I do or not. In short, Arnold's account seems to me to err in putting the emphasis upon the poet's feelings, instead of upon the poetry. We can say that in poetry there is communication from writer to reader, but should not proceed from this to think of the poetry as being primarily the vehicle of communication. Communication may take place, but will explain nothing. Or Arnold's statement may be criticised in another way, by asking whether Wordsworth would be a less great poet, if he felt with extraordinary power the horror offered to us in nature, and the boredom and sense of restriction in the simple primary affections and duties? Arnold seems to think that because, as he says, Wordsworth "deals with more of *life*" [148] than Burns, Keats and Heine, he is dealing with more of moral ideas. A poetry which is concerned with moral ideas, it would appear, is concerned with life; and a poetry concerned with life is concerned with moral ideas.

This is not the place for discussing the deplorable moral and religious effects of confusing poetry and morals in the attempt to find a substitute for religious faith.[26] What concerns me here, is the disturbance of our literary values in consequence of it. One observes this in Arnold's criticism. It is easy to see that Dryden underrated Chaucer; not so easy to see that to rate Chaucer as highly as Dryden did (in a period in which critics were not lavish of superlatives) was a triumph of objectivity for its time, as was Dryden's consistent differentiation between Shakespeare and Beaumont and Fletcher. It is easy to see that Johnson underrated Donne and overrated Cowley; it is even possible to come to understand why. But neither Johnson nor Dryden had any axe to grind; and in their errors they are more consistent than Arnold.[27] Take, for instance, Arnold's opinion of Chaucer, a poet who, although very different from Arnold, was not altogether deficient in high seriousness. First he contrasts Chaucer with Dante: we admit the inferiority, and are almost convinced that Chaucer is not serious enough. But is Chaucer, in the end, less serious than Wordsworth, with whom Arnold does not compare him? And when Arnold puts Chaucer below François Villon, although he is in a way right, and although it was high time that somebody in England spoke up for Villon, one does not feel that the theory of "high seriousness" is in operation.[28] That is one of the troubles of the critic who feels called upon to set the poets in rank: if he is honest with his own sensibility he must now and again violate his own rules of rating. There are also dangers arising from being too sure that one knows what "genuine poetry" is. Here is one very positive pronouncement:

> The difference between genuine poetry and the poetry of Dryden, Pope, and all their school, is briefly this: their poetry is conceived and

> composed in their wits, genuine poetry is conceived and composed in the soul. The difference between the two kinds of poetry is immense.[29]*

And what, we wonder, had Arnold –

> For rigorous teachers seized my youth
> And purged its faith, and trimmed its fire,
> Showed him the high, white star of Truth,
> There bade him gaze, and there aspire;
> Even now their whispers pierce the gloom:
> *What dost thou in this living tomb?*[30]

what had a man whose youth was so rigorously seized and purged at Rugby, to do with an abstract entity like the Soul?[31] "The difference between the two kinds of poetry is immense." But there are not two kinds of poetry, but many kinds; and the difference here is no more immense than that between the kind of Shakespeare and the kind of Arnold. There is petulance in such a judgement, arrogance and excess of heat. It was justifiable for Coleridge and Wordsworth and Keats to depreciate Dryden and Pope, in the ardour of the changes which they were busy about; but Arnold was engaged in no revolution, and his shortsightedness can only be excused.

I do not mean to suggest that Arnold's conception of the use of poetry, an educator's view, vitiates his criticism. To ask of poetry that it give religious and philosophic satisfaction, while deprecating philosophy and dogmatic religion, is of course to embrace the shadow of a shade. But Arnold had real taste. His preoccupations, as I have said, make him too exclusively concerned with *great* poetry, and with the greatness of it. His view of Milton is for this reason unsatisfying.[32] But you cannot read his essay on "The Study of Poetry" without being convinced by the felicity of his quotations: to be able to quote as Arnold could is the best evidence of taste. The essay is a classic in English criticism: so much is said in so little space, with such economy and with such authority. Yet he was so conscious of what, for him, poetry was *for*, that he could not altogether see it for what it is. And I am not sure that he was highly sensitive to the musical qualities of verse. His own occasional bad lapses arouse the suspicion; and so far as I can recollect he never emphasises this virtue of poetic style, this fundamental, in his criticism. What I call the "auditory imagination" is the feeling for syllable and rhythm, penetrating far below the conscious levels of thought and feeling, invigorating every word; sinking to the most primitive and forgotten, returning to the origin and bringing something back, seeking the beginning and the end. It works through meanings, certainly, or not without meanings in the ordinary sense, and fuses the old and obliterated and the trite, the current, and the new and surprising, the most ancient and the most civilised mentality. Arnold's notion of "life," in his account of poetry, does not perhaps go deep enough.

I feel, rather than observe, an inner uncertainty and lack of confidence and conviction in Matthew Arnold: the conservatism which springs from lack of faith, and the zeal for reform which springs from dislike of change. Perhaps, looking inward and finding how little he had to support him, looking outward on the state of society and its tendencies, he was somewhat disturbed. He had no real serenity, only an impeccable demeanour. Perhaps he cared too much for civilisation, forgetting that Heaven and Earth shall pass away, and Mr. Arnold with them, and there is only one stay. He is a representative figure. A man's theory of the place of poetry is not independent of his view of life in general.

NOTES

1. On the morning of the lecture, the title was announced as "Arnold and the Academic Mind" in the *Harvard Crimson*.

2*. TSE's note: "Letter to Leslie Stephen, January 8th, 1896." *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton, with biographical comment by his daughter Sara Norton and M. A. DeWolfe Howe*, vol 2 (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 236-37.

3. "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," originally a lecture delivered at Oxford on 29 Oct 1864, was the opening statement of Arnold's critical position in his 1865 *Essays in Criticism*. The quotation on the Romantic poets continues: "This makes Byron so empty of matter, Shelley so incoherent, Wordsworth even, profound as he is, so wanting in completeness and variety." *Essays in Criticism, First Series* (London: Macmillan, 1898), 7.

4. TSE states in "Arnold and Pater" (1930): "The degradation of philosophy and religion, skilfully initiated by Arnold, is competently continued by Pater" (4.180). Arnold deploys the term "Philistine" (borrowed from Heinrich Heine's use of the German word *Philister*) to describe the narrow-mindedness of the English middle classes.

5. In 1843, Arnold won the Newdigate Prize for poetry at Oxford with his ode "Cromwell."

6. *Empedocles on Etna: a dramatic poem* (1852) was the title poem of Arnold's second volume of poems. At the poem's end Empedocles, an ancient Greek poet-philosopher, throws himself into Etna's volcanic crater. In the preface to his 1853 *Poems*, Arnold repudiated the poem and did not permit its republication until 1867. *Tristam and Iseult* (1852) is a narrative reworking of this tragic love story; the legend acquired popularity after Wagner's opera premiered in 1865. "The Forsaken Merman" (1849) is based on a Danish ballad; *Sohrab and Rustum: An Episode* (1853) is drawn from Firdausi's Persian epic, in which the great warrior Rustum kills, when they are

unknown to one another, his long-lost son Sohrab in combat. In his previous Norton lecture, TSE says that Landor's epic *Gebir* (1798) "deserves to be much more read than it is" (4.641).

7. *qui sait se conduire*: who knows how to behave.

8. In "Arnold and Pater," TSE remarks of *Literature and Dogma* (1873) and Arnold's other interventions in the religious controversies of the 1870s: "in them reasoning power matters, and it fails him" (4.177).

9. "The Study of Poetry" (1880) was a general introduction to a four-volume anthology, *The English Poets*, edited by T. H. Ward. In the passage quoted by TSE, Arnold remarks: "[Burns's] world of Scotch drink, Scotch religion, and Scotch manners is against a poet, not for him, when it is not a partial countryman who reads him; for in itself it is not a beautiful world, and no one can deny that it is of advantage to a poet to deal with a beautiful world." *Essays in Criticism, Second Series* (London: Macmillan, 1898), 44.

10. TSE alludes to Baudelaire's "Le voyage," particularly to sections IV ("La gloire du soleil sur la mer violette, / La gloire des cités dans le soleil couchant") and VII ("notre image: / Une oasis d'horreur dans un désert d'ennui!").

11*. TSE's note: "I do not quote these lines as good verse. They are very carelessly written. The fourth line is particularly clumsy, the sixth has a bathetic repetition. To 'put by' the cloud of human destiny is not a felicitous expression. The dashes at the end of two lines are a symptom of weakness, like Arnold's irritating use of italicised words." From "Memorial Verses" (1850) written upon the death of William Wordsworth, *Poetical Works of Matthew Arnold* (London: Macmillan, 1905), 291.

12. "Isolation. To Marguerite" (1852), *Poetical Works*, 197.

13. Biographers are uncertain about the identity of "Marguerite" in Arnold's "Switzerland" sequence of love lyrics: she may have been a young Swiss or French woman, or a figment of his imagination.

14. TSE states similarly in "Dante" (1929): "It would appear that 'literary appreciation' is an abstraction, and pure poetry a phantom; and that both in creation and enjoyment much always enters which is, from the point of view of 'Art,' irrelevant" (3.730).

15. TSE considered the contributions of Coleridge, Lamb and De Quincey as Shakespeare critics in a reconstructed lecture, "The Study of Shakespeare Criticism," delivered at Washington University, St. Louis, on 16 Jan 1933 and again, shortly after this Norton lecture, at Haverford College, PA, on 24 Mar (4.837).

16. *The Golden Treasury of English Songs and Lyrics* (1861) was a popular anthology of English poetry, selected by Francis Turner Palgrave and revised, with assistance from Tennyson, in 1891. Palgrave excluded living poets. TSE listed the anthology in his recommended reading for a 1918 tutorial class on Modern English Literature (1.758).

17. Arnold was appointed an Inspector of Schools in Apr 1851, a post he performed until 1886. His inspecting duties did not preclude his being elected Oxford Professor of Poetry in May 1857, an office he held for ten years, requiring three professorial lectures annually. Arnold was the first incumbent to deliver his lectures in English rather than Latin.

18. Arnold's essays on Heine and the French poet Georges Maurice de Guérin du Cayla (1810-39) and his sister Eugénie (1805-48) appeared in the first series of *Essays in Criticism*

(1865). His essay on the Swiss philosopher, poet, and critic Henri-Frédéric Amiel (1821-81) concluded the second series (1888). TSE published P. Mansell Jones's article on "The Failure of Amiel" in the *Criterion* for Sept 1935 (18-29).

19. *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, 143. Arnold's essay on Wordsworth first appeared in *Macmillan's Magazine* for Mar 1879 and as the preface to *Poems of Wordsworth* (1879).

20. "Heine's Grave" (1867), written in 1862-63 following Arnold's visit to Heine's grave in the Montmartre Cemetery, Paris, on 14 Sept 1858. Because of his political radicalism, Heine spent the last twenty-five years of his life as an expatriate in Paris.

21*. TSE's note: "It may be said of Arnold's inferior work, as was said of that of an inferior poet, that he faggoted his verses as they fell, And if they rhymed and rattled, all was well. Of course we do not judge Arnold as a poet by such effusions as this, but we cannot be blamed for forming a lower opinion of his capacity for self-criticism. He need not have printed them." Opening lines from "Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoön," *Poetical Works*, 236. Lessing's *Laocoön* (1764) takes the famous statuary representing Laocoön and his sons in the coils of a large serpent, and Virgil's description of this incident, as the basis for a meditation on the differences between poetry and the plastic arts.

22. TSE's formulation echoes W. B. Yeats's reflections in *The Trembling of the Veil* (1922) on the mask as an anti-self: "as I look backward upon my own writing, I take pleasure alone in those verses where it seems to me I have found something hard and cold, some articulation of the Image, which is the opposite of all that I am in my daily life, and all that my country is; yet man or nation can no more make this Mask or Image than the seed can be made by the soil into which it is cast." *Autobiographies* (London: Macmillan, 1926), 339-40.

23. In "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930), TSE disputes the "philosophy of nature" that the British philosopher Whitehead extracted from the poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley (4.20-21).

24*. TSE's note: "'Arnold and Pater,' in *Selected Essays*."

25. *Trans*: "He was as serene in his lack of faith as the mystic is in his belief." TSE quotes from the French socialist intellectual Charles Bonnier (1863-1926) in "Ex-voto," published as Appendix B to Oliver Elton's *Frederick York Powell: A Life and Selection from his Letters and Occasional Writings*, vol 1 (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906), 457. Powell, Professor of Modern History, Oxford, took a keen interest in the late nineteenth-century French poetry and traveled frequently to Paris.

26. In "Arnold and Pater," TSE draws two conclusions from Arnold's writings on Culture: "(1) that Religion is Morals, (2) that Religion is Art" (4.178). In "The Study of Poetry," Arnold himself writes: "More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry." *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, 2-3.

27. TSE discusses the critical values and judgments of Dryden and Johnson at length in his third Norton lecture "The Age of Dryden" (4.614).

28. After praising Chaucer's qualities in "The Study of Poetry," Arnold ranks him below Homer, Dante, Shakespeare, and Villon, since "he lacks the high seriousness of the great classics, and therewith an important part of their virtue." *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, 34.

29*. TSE's note: "Practically the same distinction as that of Arnold is maintained, though with more subtlety and persuasiveness, by Mr. Housman in his *Name and Nature of Poetry*.

A newer and more radical classification to the same effect is that of Mr. Herbert Read already quoted." The quotation is taken from Arnold's essay on "Thomas Gray" (1880), *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, 95. Housman's 1933 Leslie Stephen lecture, *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, argues that during the eighteenth century: "There was a whole age of English in which the place of poetry was usurped by something very different which possessed the proper and specific name of wit" (Cambridge UP, 1933), 17. TSE read and reviewed *The Name and Nature of Poetry* for the *Criterion* after he returned to the United Kingdom (4.557). In his previous Norton lecture, he disputes the tendentious literary history advanced by Herbert Read's *Form in Modern Poetry* (1932), which asserts that the advent of *Lyrical Ballads* in 1798 put an end to the dominance of "Wit-writing."

30. "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (1855), *Poetical Works*, 320. Largely composed in 1851-52, this poem broods upon the impossibility of regaining the sustaining faith of the monks of the Carthusian monastery La Grande Chartreuse in the French Alps.

31. Arnold was educated at Rugby School where his father Thomas was the headmaster noted for his wide-ranging reforms of the school curriculum and administration, and where he fostered an ethos that became associated with "muscular Christianity."

32. In his 1888 essay on Milton, Arnold remarks: "Milton, from one end of *Paradise Lost* to the other, is in his diction and rhythm constantly a great artist in the great style." *Essays in Criticism, Second Series*, 62.

Lecture VII

The Modern Mind

March 17th, 1933

There is a sentence in Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism* which occurs to me in this context: "Work such as Picasso's," he says, "shows a fearful progress in self-consciousness on the part of painting."[1]

So far I have drawn a few light sketches to indicate the changes in the self-consciousness of poets thinking about poetry. A thorough history of this "progress in self-consciousness" in poetry and the criticism of poetry would have kinds of criticism to consider which do not fall within the narrow scope of these lectures: the history of Shakespeare criticism alone, in which, for instance, Morgann's essay on the character of Falstaff, and Coleridge's *Lectures on Shakespeare* would be representative moments, would have to be considered in some detail.[2] But we have observed the notable development in self-consciousness in Dryden's Prefaces, and in the first serious attempt, which he made, at a valuation of the English poets. We have seen his work in one direction continued, and a method perfected, by Johnson in his careful estimation of a number of poets, an estimate arrived at by the application of what are on the whole admirably consistent standards.[3] We have found a deeper insight into the nature of the poetic activity in remarks scattered through the writings of Coleridge and in the "Preface" of Wordsworth and in the Letters of Keats; and a perception, still immature, of the need to elucidate the social function of poetry in Wordsworth's "Preface" and in Shelley's "Defence." In the criticism of Arnold we find a continuation of the work of the Romantic poets with a new appraisal of the poetry of the past by a method which, lacking the precision of Johnson's, gropes towards wider and deeper connexions.[4] I have not wished to exhibit this "progress in self-consciousness" as being necessarily *progress* with an association of higher value. For one thing, it cannot be wholly abstracted from the general changes in the human mind in history; and that these changes have any teleological significance is not one of my assumptions.

Arnold's insistence upon order in poetry according to a moral valuation was, for better or worse, of the first importance for his age. When he is not at his best he obviously falls between two stools. Just as his poetry is too reflective, too ruminative, to rise ever to the first rank, so also is his criticism. He is not, on the one hand, quite a pure enough poet to have the sudden illuminations which we find in the criticism of Wordsworth, Coleridge and Keats; and on the other hand he lacked the mental discipline, the passion for exactness in the use of words and for consistency and continuity of reasoning, which distinguishes the philosopher. He sometimes confuses words and meanings: neither as poet nor as philosopher should he have been satisfied with such an utterance as that "poetry is at bottom a criticism of life."[5] A more profound insight into poetry and a more exact use of language than Arnold's are required. The critical method of Arnold, the assumptions of Arnold, remained valid for the rest of his century. In quite diverse developments, it is the criticism of Arnold that sets the tone: Walter Pater, Arthur Symons, Addington Symonds, Leslie Stephen, F. W. H. Myers, George Saintsbury – all the more eminent critical names of the time bear witness to it.[6]

Whether we agree or not with any or all of his conclusions, whether we admit or deny that his method is adequate, we must admit that the work of Mr. I. A. Richards will have been of cardinal importance in the history of literary criticism. Even if his criticism proves to be entirely on the wrong track, even if this modern "self-consciousness" turns out to be only a blind alley, Mr. Richards will have done something in accelerating the exhaustion of the possibilities. He will have helped indirectly to discredit the criticism of persons qualified neither by sensibility nor by knowledge of poetry, from which we suffer daily. There is some hope of greater clarity; we should begin to learn to distinguish the appreciation of poetry from theorising about poetry, and to know when we are not talking about poetry but about something else suggested by it. There are two elements in Richards's scheme, both of considerable importance for its ultimate standing, of which I have the gravest doubts but with which I am not here concerned: his theory of Value and his theory of Education (or rather the theory of Education assumed in or implied by his attitude in *Practical Criticism*).[7] As for psychology and linguistics, that is his field and not mine. I am more concerned here with what seem to me to be a few unexamined assumptions that he has made. I do not know whether he still adheres to certain assertions made in his early essay *Science and Poetry*; but I do not understand that he has yet made any public modification of them. Here is one that is in my mind:

> The most dangerous of the sciences is only now beginning to come into action. I am thinking less of Psycho-analysis or of Behaviourism than of the whole subject which includes them. It is very probable that the Hindenburg Line to which the defence of our traditions retired as a result of the onslaughts of the last century will be blown up in the near future. If this should happen a mental chaos such as man has never experienced may be expected. We shall then be thrown back, as Matthew Arnold foresaw, upon poetry. It is capable of saving us . . .[8]

I should have felt completely at a loss in this passage, had not Matthew Arnold turned up; and then it seemed to me that I knew a little better what was what. I should say that an affirmation like this was highly characteristic of one type of modern mind. For one of the things that one can say about the modern mind is that it comprehends every extreme and degree of opinion. Here, from the essay, *Art and Scholasticism*, which I have already quoted, is Mr. Maritain:

> It is a deadly error to expect poetry to provide the supersubstantial nourishment of man. [79][9]

Mr. Maritain is a theologian as well as philosopher, and you may be sure that when he says "deadly error" he is in deadly earnest. But if the author of *Anti-Moderne* is hardly to be considered a "modern" man, we can find other varieties of opinion.[10] In a book called *The Human Parrot*, Mr. Montgomery Belgion has two essays, one called "Art and Mr. Maritain" and the other "What is Criticism?" from which you will learn that neither Maritain nor Richards knows what he is talking about.[11] Mr. Richards further maintains that the experience of poetry is not a mystical revelation, and the Abbé Henri Brémond,[12]* in *Prayer and Poetry*, is concerned with telling us in what kind and degree it is. On this point Mr. Belgion is apparently in accord with Mr. Richards. And we may be wise to keep in mind a remark of Mr. Herbert Read in *Form in Modern Poetry*: "If a literary critic happens to be also a poet . . . he is liable to suffer from dilemmas which do not trouble the philosophic calm of his more prosaic colleagues."[13]

Beyond a belief that poetry does something of importance, or has something of importance to do, there does not seem to be much agreement. It is interesting that in our time, which has not produced any vast number of important poets, so many people – and there are many more – should be asking questions about poetry. These problems are not those which properly concern poets as poets at all; if poets plunge into the discussion, it is probably because they have interests and curiosities outside of writing poetry. We need not summon those who call themselves Humanists (for they have for the most part not been primarily occupied with the nature and function of poetry) to bear witness that we have here the problem of religious faith and its substitutes.[14] Not all contemporary critics, of course, but at least a number who appear to have little else in common, seem to consider that art, specifically poetry, has something to do with religion, though they disagree as to what this something may be. The relationship is not always envisaged so moralistically as it was by Arnold, nor so generally as in the statement by Mr. Richards which I quoted. For Mr. Belgion, for instance,

> An outstanding example of poetic allegory is in the final canto of the *Paradiso*, where the poet seeks to give an allegorical account of the Beatific Vision, and then declares his efforts vain. We may read this over and over again, and in the end we shall no more have had a revelation of the nature of the Vision than we had before ever we had heard of either it or Dante.[15]

Mr. Belgion seems to have taken Dante at his word. But what we experience as readers is never exactly what the poet experienced, nor would there be any point in its being, though certainly it has some relation to the poet's experience. What the poet experienced is not poetry but poetic material; the writing of the poetry is a fresh "experience" for him, and the reading of it, by the author or anyone else, is another thing still. Mr. Belgion, in denying a theory which he attributes to Mr. Maritain, seems to me to make his own mistakes; but it is a religion-analogy which is in question. Mr. Richards is much occupied with the religious problem simply in the attempt to avoid it. In an appendix to the second edition of *Principles of Literary Criticism* he has a note on my own verse, which, being as favourable as I could desire, seems to me very acute. But he observes that Canto XXVI of the *Purgatorio* illuminates my "persistent concern with sex, the problem of our generation, as religion was the problem of the last."[16] I readily admit the importance of Canto XXVI, and it was shrewd of Mr. Richards to notice it; but in his contrast of sex and religion he makes a distinction which is too subtile for me to grasp. One might think that sex and religion were "problems" like Free Trade and Imperial Preference; it seems odd that the human race should have gone on for so many thousands of years before it suddenly realised that religion and sex, one right after the other, presented problems.[17]

It has been my view throughout – and it is only a commonplace after all – that the development and change of poetry and of the criticism of it is due to elements which enter from outside. I tried to draw attention not so much to the importance of Dryden's "contribution" to literary criticism, as if he were merely adding to a store of quantity, as to the importance of the fact that he should *want* to articulate and expound his views on drama and translation and on the English poetry of the past; and, when we came to Johnson, to call attention to the further development of an historical consciousness which made Johnson *want* to estimate, in more detail, the English poets of his own age and of previous ages;[18*] and it seemed to me that Wordsworth's theories about poetry drew their aliment from social sources. To Matthew Arnold we owe the credit of bringing the religious issue explicitly into the discussion of literature and poetry; and with due respect to Mr. Richards, and with Mr. Richards himself as a witness, it does not seem to me that this "issue" has been wholly put aside and replaced by that of "sex." My contemporaries seem to me still to be occupied with it, whether they call themselves churchmen, or agnostics, or rationalists, or social revolutionists. The contrast between the doubts that our contemporaries express, and the questions that they ask and the problems they put themselves, and the attitude of at least a part of the past, was well put by Jacques Rivière in two sentences:

> If in the seventeenth century Molière or Racine had been asked why he wrote, no doubt he would have been able to find but one answer; that he wrote "for the entertainment of decent people" (*pour distraire les honnêtes gens*). It is only with the advent of Romanticism that the literary act came to be conceived as a sort of raid on the absolute and its result as a revelation.[19]

Rivière's form of expression is not, to my mind, altogether happy. One might suppose that all that had happened was that a wilful perversity had taken possession of literary men, a new literary disease called Romanticism. That is one of the dangers of expressing one's meaning in terms of "Romanticism": it is a term which is constantly changing in different contexts, and which is now limited to what appear to be purely literary and purely local problems, now expanding to cover almost the whole of the life of a time and of nearly the whole world. It has perhaps not been observed that in its more comprehensive significance "Romanticism" comes to include nearly everything that distinguishes the last two hundred and fifty years or so from their predecessors, and includes so much that it ceases to bring with it any praise or blame. The change to which Rivière alludes is not a contrast between Molière and Racine on the one hand and more modern French writers on the other; it neither reflects credit upon the former nor implies inferiority in the latter. In the interest of clarity and simplicity I wish myself to avoid employing the terms Romanticism and Classicism, terms which inflame political passions, and tend to prejudice our conclusions.[20] I am only concerned with my contention that the notion of what poetry is for, of what is its function to do, does change, and therefore I quoted Rivière; I am concerned further with criticism as evidence of the conception of the use of poetry in the critic's time, and assert that in order to compare the work of different critics we must investigate their assumptions as to what poetry does and ought to do. Examination of the criticism of our time leads me to believe that we are still in the Arnold period.

I speak of Mr. Richards's views with some diffidence. Some of the problems he discusses are themselves very difficult, and only those are qualified to criticise who have applied themselves to the same specialised studies and have acquired proficiency in this kind of thinking. But here I limit myself to passages in which he does not seem to be speaking as a specialist, and in which I have no advantage of special knowledge either. There are two reasons why the writer of poetry must not be thought to have any great advantage. One is that a discussion of poetry such as this takes us far outside the limits within which a poet may speak with authority; the other is that the poet does many things upon instinct, for which he can give no better account than anybody else. A poet can try, of course, to give an honest report of the way in which he himself writes: the result may, if he is a good observer, be illuminating. And in one sense, but a very limited one, he knows better what his poems "mean" than can anyone else; he may know the history of their composition, the material which has gone in and come out in an unrecognisable form, and he knows what he was trying to do and what he was meaning to mean. But what a poem means is as much what it means to others as what it means to the author; and indeed, in the course of time a poet may become merely a reader in respect to his own works, forgetting his original meaning – or without forgetting, merely changing. So that, when Mr. Richards asserts that *The Waste Land* effects "a complete severance between poetry and *all* beliefs" I am no better qualified to say No! than is any other reader.[21] I will admit that I think that either Mr. Richards is wrong, or I do not understand his meaning. The statement might mean that it was the first poetry to do what all poetry in the past would have been the better for doing: I can hardly think that he intended to pay me such an unmerited compliment. It might also mean that the present situation is radically different from any in which poetry has been produced in the past: namely, that now there is nothing in which to believe, that Belief itself is dead; and that therefore my poem is the first to respond properly to the modern situation and not call upon Make-Believe. And it is in this connexion, apparently, that Mr. Richards observes that "poetry is capable of saving us."

A discussion of Mr. Richards's theories of knowledge value and meaning would be by no means irrelevant to this assertion, but it would take us far afield, and I am not the person to undertake it. We cannot of course refute the statement "poetry is capable of saving us" without knowing which one of the multiple definitions of salvation Mr. Richards has in mind.[22]* (A good many people behave as if they thought so too: otherwise their interest in poetry is difficult to explain.) I am sure, from the differences of environment, of period, and of mental furniture, that salvation by poetry is not quite the same thing for Mr. Richards as it was for Arnold; but so far as I am concerned these are merely different shades of blue. In *Practical Criticism*[23]* Mr. Richards provides a recipe which I think throws some light upon his theological ideas. He says:

> Something like a technique or ritual for heightening sincerity might well be worked out. When our response to a poem after our best efforts remains uncertain, when we are unsure whether the feelings it excites come from a deep source in our experience, whether our liking or disliking is genuine, is *ours*, or an accident of fashion, a response to surface details or to essentials, we may perhaps help ourselves by considering it in a frame of feelings whose sincerity is beyond our questioning. Sit by the fire (with eyes shut and fingers pressed firmly upon the eyeballs) and consider with as full 'realisation' as possible – [290]

five points which follow, and which I shall comment upon one by one. We may observe, in passing, the intense religious seriousness of Mr. Richards's attitude towards poetry.[24]* What he proposes – for he hints in the passage above that his sketch might be elaborated – is nothing less than a regimen of Spiritual Exercises. Now for the points.

I. *Man's loneliness* (*the isolation of the human situation*). [290]

Loneliness is known as a frequent attitude in romantic poetry, and in the form of "lonesomeness" (as I need not remind American readers) is a frequent attitude in contemporary lyrics known as "the blues." But in what sense is Man in general isolated, and from what? What *is* the "human situation"? I can understand the isolation of the human situation as Plato's Diotima expounds it, or in the Christian sense of the separation of Man from God; but not an isolation which is not a separation from anything in particular.[25]

II. *The facts of birth, and of death, in their inexplicable oddity.*

I cannot see why the facts of birth and of death should appear odd in themselves, unless we have a conception of some other way of coming into the world and of leaving it, which strikes us as more natural.

III. *The inconceivable immensity of the Universe.*

It was not, we remember, the "immense spaces" themselves but their *eternal silence* that terrified Pascal.[26] With a definite religious background this is intelligible. But the effect of popular astronomy books (like Sir James Jeans's) upon me is only of the insignificance of vast space.[27]

IV. *Man's place in the perspective of time.* [291]

I confess that I do not find this especially edifying either, or stimulating to the imagination, unless I bring to its contemplation some belief that there is a sense and a meaning in the place of human history in the history of the world. I fear that in many people this subject of meditation can only stimulate the idle wonder and greed for facts which are satisfied by Mr. Wells's compendia.[28]

V. *The enormity* (*sc. enormousness*) *of man's ignorance*.[29]

Here again, I must ask, ignorance of what? I am acutely aware, for instance, of my own ignorance of specific subjects on which I want to know more; but Mr. Richards does not, surely, mean the ignorance of any individual man, but of *Man*. But "ignorance" must be relative to the sense in which we take the term "knowledge"; and in *Mencius on the Mind* Mr. Richards has given us a useful analysis of the numerous meanings of "knowledge."[30] Mr. Richards, who has engaged in what I believe will be most fruitful investigations of controversy as systematised misunderstanding, may justly be able to accuse me of perverting his meanings. But his modern substitute for the *Exercises* of St. Ignatius is an appeal to our feelings, and I am only trying to set down how they affect mine.[31] To me Mr. Richards's five points only express a modern emotional attitude which I cannot share, and which finds its most sentimental expression in "A Free

Man's Worship."[32] And as the contemplation of Man's place in the Universe has led Lord Russell to write such bad prose, we may wonder whether it will lead the ordinary aspirant to understanding of good poetry. It is just as likely, I suspect, to confirm him in his taste for the second-rate.

I am willing to admit that such an approach to poetry may help some people: my point is that Mr. Richards speaks as though it were good for everybody. I am perfectly ready to concede the existence of people who feel, think and believe as Mr. Richards does in these matters, if he will only concede that there are some people who do not. He told us in *Science and Poetry*:

> [For centuries] Countless pseudo-statements – about God, about the universe, about human nature, the relations of mind to mind, about the soul, its rank and destiny . . . have been believed; now they are gone, irrecoverably; and the knowledge which has killed them is not of a kind upon which an equally fine organization of the mind can be based.[33]

I submit that this is itself a pseudo-statement, if there is such a thing. But these things are indeed gone, so far as Mr. Richards is concerned, if they are no longer believed by people whose minds Mr. Richards respects: we have no ground for controversy there. I only assert again that what he is trying to do is essentially the same as what Arnold wanted to do: to preserve emotions without the beliefs with which their history has been involved. It would seem that Mr. Richards, on his own showing, is engaged in a rear-guard religious action.[34*]

Mr. Maritain, with an equally strong conviction that poetry will *not* save us, is equally despondent about the world of to-day. "Could any weakness," he asks, "be greater than the weakness of our contemporaries?" [87]. It is no more, as I have said before, the particular business of the poet as poet to concern himself with Maritain's attempt to determine the position of poetry in a Christian world than it is to concern himself with Richards's attempt to determine the position of poetry in a pagan world: but these various ambient ideas get in through the pores, and produce an unsettled state of mind. Trotsky, whose *Literature and Revolution* is the most sensible statement of a Communist attitude that I have seen,[35*] is pretty clear on the relation of the poet to his environment. He observes:

> Artistic creation is always a complicated turning inside out of old forms, under the influence of new stimuli which originate outside of

> art. In this large sense of the word, art is a handmaiden. It is not a disembodied element feeding on itself, but a function of social man indissolubly tied to his life and environment.[36]

There is a striking contrast between this conception of art as a handmaiden, and that which we have just observed of art as a saviour. But perhaps the two notions are not so opposed as they appear. Trotsky seems, in any case, to draw the commonsense distinction between art and propaganda, and to be dimly aware that the material of the artist is not his beliefs as *held*, but his beliefs as *felt* (so far as his beliefs are part of his material at all); and he is sensible enough to see that a period of revolution is not favourable to art, since it puts pressure upon the poet, both direct and indirect, to make him overconscious of his beliefs as *held*. He would not limit Communist poetry to the writing of panegyrics upon the Russian State, any more than I should limit Christian poetry to the composition of hymns; the poetry of Villon is just as "Christian" in this way as that of Prudentius or Adam of St. Victor – though I think it would be a long time before Soviet society could afford to approve a Villon, if one arose.[37*] It is probable, however, that Russian literature will become increasingly unintelligible, increasingly meaningless, to the peoples of Western Europe unless they develop in the same direction as Russia. Even as things are, in the present chaos of opinion and belief, we may expect to find quite different literatures existing in the same language and the same country. "The unconcealed and palpable influence of the devil on an important part of contemporary literature," says Mr. Maritain, "is one of the significant phenomena of the history of our time" [84n1]. I can hardly expect most of my readers to take this remark seriously;[38†] those who do will have very different criteria of criticism from those who do not. Another observation of Mr. Maritain's may be less unacceptable:

> By showing us where moral truth and the genuine supernatural are situate, religion saves poetry from the absurdity of believing itself destined to transform ethics and life: saves it from overweening arrogance.[39] [85]

This seems to me to be putting the finger on the great weakness of much poetry and criticism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. But between the motive which Rivière attributed to Molière and Racine[40*] and the motive of Matthew Arnold bearing on shoulders immense what he thought to be the orb of the poet's fate, there is a serious *via media*.

As the doctrine of the moral and educational value of poetry has been elaborated in different forms by Arnold and Mr. Richards, so the Abbé Brémond presented a modern equivalent for the theory of divine inspiration. The task of *Prayer and Poetry* is to establish the likeness, and the difference of kind and degree, between poetry and mysticism. In his attempt to demonstrate this relation he safeguards himself by just qualifications, and makes many penetrating remarks about the nature of poetry. I will confine myself to two pieces of caution. My first qualm is over the assertion that "the more of a poet any particular poet is, the more he is tormented by the need of communicating his experience."[41] This is a downright sort of statement which is very easy to accept without examination; but the matter is not so simple as all that. I should say that the poet is tormented primarily by the need to write a poem – and so, I regret to find, are a legion of people who are not poets: so that the line between "need" to write and "desire" to write is by no means easy to draw. And what is the experience that the poet is so bursting to communicate? By the time it has settled down into a poem it may be so different from the original experience as to be hardly recognisable. The "experience" in question may be the result of a fusion of feelings so numerous, and ultimately so obscure in their origins, that even if there be communication of them, the poet may hardly be aware of what he is communicating; and what is there to be communicated was not in existence before the poem was completed. "Communication" will not explain poetry. I will not say that there is not always some varying degree of communication in poetry, or that poetry could exist without any communication taking place. There is room for very great individual variation in the motives of equally good individual poets; and we have the assurance of Coleridge, with the approval of Mr. Housman, that "poetry gives most pleasure when only generally and not perfectly understood."[42] And I think that my first objection to Brémond's theory is related to the second, in which also the question of motive and intention enters. Any theory which relates poetry very closely to a religious or a social scheme of things aims, probably, to *explain* poetry by discovering its natural laws; but it is in danger of *binding* poetry by legislation to be observed – and poetry can recognise no such laws. When the critic falls into this error he has probably done what we all do: when we generalise about poetry, as I have said before, we are generalising from the poetry which we best know and best like; not from all poetry, or even all of the poetry which we have read. What is "all poetry"? Everything written in verse which a sufficient number of the best minds have considered to be poetry. By a sufficient number, I mean enough persons of different types, at different times and places, over a space of time, and including foreigners as well as those to whom the language is native, to cancel every personal bias and eccentricity of taste (for we must all be slightly eccentric in taste to have any taste at all). Now when an account like the Abbé Brémond's is tested by being made itself a test, it tends to reveal some narrowness and exclusiveness; at any rate, a good deal of poetry that I like would be excluded, or given some other name than poetry; just as other writers who like to include much prose as being essentially "poetry" create confusion by including too much. That there is a relation (not necessarily noetic, perhaps merely psychological) between mysticism and some kinds of poetry, or some of the kinds of state in which poetry is produced, I make no doubt. But I prefer not to define, or to test, poetry by means of speculations about its origins; you cannot find a sure test for poetry, a test by which you may distinguish between poetry and mere good verse, by reference to its putative antecedents in the mind of the poet. Brémond seems to me to introduce extra-poetic laws for poetry: such laws as have been frequently made, and constantly violated.

There is another danger in the association of poetry with mysticism besides that which I have just mentioned, and that of leading the reader to look in poetry for religious satisfactions. These were dangers for the critic and the reader; there is also a danger for the poet. No one can read Mr. Yeats's *Autobiographies* and his earlier poetry without feeling that the author was trying to get as a poet something like the exaltation to be obtained, I believe, from hashisch or nitrous oxide. He was very much fascinated by self-induced trance states, calculated symbolism, mediums, theosophy, crystal-gazing, folklore and hobgoblins. Golden apples, archers, black pigs and such paraphernalia abounded.[43] Often the verse has an hypnotic charm: but you cannot take heaven by magic, especially if you are, like Mr. Yeats, a very sane person. Then, by a great triumph of development, Mr. Yeats began to write and is still writing some of the most beautiful poetry in the language, some of the clearest, simplest, most direct.[44]*

The number of people capable of appreciating "all poetry" is probably very small, if not merely a theoretical limit; but the number of people who can get *some* pleasure and benefit from some poetry is, I believe, very large. A perfectly satisfactory theory which applied to all poetry would do so only at the cost of being voided of all content; the more usual reason for the unsatisfactoriness of our theories and general statements about poetry is that while professing to apply to all poetry, they are really theories about, or generalisations from, a limited range of poetry. Even when two persons of taste like the same poetry, this poetry will be arranged in their minds in slightly different patterns; our individual taste in poetry bears the indelible traces of our individual lives with all their experience pleasurable and painful. We are apt either to shape a theory to cover the poetry that we find most moving, or – what is less excusable – to choose the poetry which illustrates the theory we want to hold. You do not find Matthew Arnold quoting Rochester or Sedley.[45] And it is not merely a matter of individual caprice. Each age demands different things from poetry, though its demands are modified, from time to time, by what some new poet has given. So our criticism, from age to age, will reflect the things that the age demands; and the criticism of no one man and of no one age can be expected to embrace the whole nature of poetry or exhaust all of its uses. Our contemporary critics, like their predecessors, are making particular responses to particular situations. No two readers, perhaps, will go to poetry with quite the same demands. Amongst all these demands from poetry and responses to it there is always some permanent element in common, just as there are standards of good and bad writing independent of what any one of us happens to like and dislike; but every effort to formulate the common element is limited by the limitations of particular men in particular places and at particular times; and these limitations become manifest in the perspective of history.

NOTES

1. *Art and Scholasticism*, trans. J. F. Scanlan (London: Sheed and Ward, 1930), 77; subsequent page references to this edition are given in the text. TSE's earlier translation of this passage reads: "Work like that of Picasso shows for painting a terrible progress in self-knowledge." "Poetry and Religion," *Criterion*, 5 (Jan 1927), 19.

2. TSE refers to Maurice Morgann's *An Essay on the Dramatic Character of Sir John Falstaff* (1777) and Coleridge's celebrated series of lectures on Shakespeare and Milton given 1811-12. TSE possessed a copy of Coleridge's *Lectures on Shakespeare and other Dramatists* (1913).

3. TSE discusses Dryden and Johnson as critics in his third Norton lecture (4.614).

4. TSE discusses Wordworth's "Preface" to *Lyrical Ballads*, Shelley's "Defence of Poetry," and Arnold's criticism of the Romantic poets in his fourth, fifth, and sixth Norton lectures, respectively.

5. *Essays in Criticism, Second Series* (London: Macmillan, 1888), 143. The remark comes from Arnold's essay on Wordsworth, first published in 1879.

6. On 17 Sept 1920, TSE wrote to Sydney Schiff of his forthcoming collection of essays, *The Sacred Wood*: "I am using Arnold a little as a stalking horse, or as a cloak of invisibility – respectability to protect me from the elderly" (*L1* 501). F. W. H. Myers (1843-1901), essayist and

classical scholar, fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge (1865-74), and from 1872 (following in Arnold's footsteps) an Inspector of Schools, was a friend of William James and a founder of the Society for Psychical Research.

7. Richards addresses "Suggestions towards a Remedy" for defective reading of literature in universities in Part IV of *Practical Criticism* (1929), 333-51.

8. *Science and Poetry* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1926), 82. The Hindenburg Line was a German defensive position built during World War I.

9. In "Poetry and Religion" (1927), TSE translates this line in the *Criterion* of Jan 1927 as: "It is a mortal error to look to poetry for the supersubstantial food of man" (20).

10. Maritain was the author of *Antimoderne* (1922), which was critical of some contemporary movements in philosophy, literature, and art.

11. In his chapter "Art and Mr. Maritain," Belgion remarked that Maritain's *Art and Scholasticism* "is a theory of fine art in general and of poetry in particular, which is neither the Schoolmen's nor the Ancients', but his own and the theory is false." *The Human Parrot and Other Essays* (London: Oxford UP, 1931), 54.

12*. TSE's note: "While preparing this book for press I learn with great regret of the Abbé Brémond's untimely death. It is a great pity that he could not have lived to complete the *Histoire du sentiment religieux en France*." Mario Praz reviewed the English edition of Brémond's *Prière et Poésie* (1926), translated by Algar Thorold as *Prayer and Poetry: A Contribution to Poetical Theory* (1927) for the *Criterion* of July 1929 (740-45). On 31 Oct 1928, TSE told Praz that he thought the book "very interesting" (*L4* 302). Brémond died in the Pyrénées on 17 Aug 1933 following TSE's return to London. His *magnum opus* was *Histoire littéraire du sentiment religieux en France depuis la fin des guerres de religion jusqu'à nos jours*, 11 vols (1916 to 1936), translated by K. L. Montgomery as *A Literary History of Religious Thought in France* (1928).

13. *Form in Modern Poetry* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932), 7.

14. TSE had recently collected his essays "The Humanism of Irving Babbitt" (1928) and "Second Thoughts about Humanism" (1929), both of which address humanism as a substitute for religion, in *Selected Essays* (1932).

15. *The Human Parrot*, 72.

16. *Principles of Literary Criticism* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1926), 292. In Canto XXVI of *Purgatorio*, Dante meets Arnaut Daniel among the lustful.

17. TSE discusses the British political debate over "Empire Free Trade" in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Jan 1930 (4.4) and Oct 1930 (4.191).

18*. TSE's note: "The fact that Johnson was working largely to order only indicates that this historical consciousness was already developed."

19. TSE translates from Jacques Rivière's "La crise du concept de literature" in *NRF*, 11 (1 Feb 1924), 159-70: "Aux XVIIIe . . . si l'idée était venue à quelqu'un de demander à Molière ou à Racine pourquoi ils écrivaient, ils n'eussent sans doute pas pu trouver d'autre réponse que: 'Pour distraire les honnêtes gens.' C'est avec le romantisme seulement que l'acte littéraire a commencé à être conçu comme une sorte de tentative sur l'absolu, et son résultat comme une revelation" (161). TSE cited the importance of the essay in his "Commentary" for July 1924 (2.531). TSE uses Rivière's phrase in the 1928 Preface to the second edition of *The Sacred Wood*: "I call [poetry] . . . an amusement *pour distraire les honnêtes gens*, not because that is a true definition, but because if you call it anything else you are likely to call it something still more false" (3.414).

20. TSE had engaged with John Middleton Murry in a long-running dispute on the value of Romanticism and Classicism in the *Criterion* and *Adelphi* from 1923 to 1927.

21. "A Background for Contemporary Poetry," *Criterion*, 3 (July 1925), 520n.

22*. TSE's note: "See his *Mencius on the Mind*. There is of course a locution in which we say of someone 'he is not one of *us*'; it is possible that the 'us' of Mr. Richards's statement represents an equally limited and select number." *Mencius on the Mind: Experiments in Multiple Definition* (1932) offers multiple definitions of key Confucian concepts. In his *Criterion* review, English Jesuit Martin D'Arcy criticized Richards's technique of multiple definition: "The chief interest of philosophers and of every man is truth, and if, as I hold, one definition is right and the others wrong, it is far better first to find out what that definition is" (*Criterion*, 12, Jan 1933, 281).

23*. TSE's note: "Second Impression, p. 290." The 1930 second impression of *Practical Criticism* contains a few alterations from the 1929 first edition.

24*. TSE's note: "This passage is introduced by a long and important discussion of Confucius' conception of 'sincerity,' which should be read attentively. In passing, it is worthy of remark that Mr. Richards shares his interest in Chinese philosophy with Mr. Ezra Pound and with the late Irving Babbitt. An investigation of an interest common to three apparently quite different thinkers would, I believe, repay the labour. It seems to indicate, at least, a deracination from the Christian tradition. The thought of these three men seems to me to have an interesting similarity." TSE considers the influence of Confucian thought on Babbitt, Pound, and Richards in his Page-Barbour Lectures, *After Strange Gods* (*ASG* 40-41).

25. Diotima of Mantinea (Latin: Diotīma, Greek: Διοτίμα), a female philosopher who plays an important role in Plato's Symposium. Her ideas are the origin of the concept of Platonic love. Since the only source concerning her is Plato, it is uncertain whether she was a real historical personage or merely a fictional creation. In his copy of Charles Bakewell's *Source Book in Ancient Philosophy*, used in his Harvard course "Philosophy A" (1.775), TSE identified this sentence, spoken by Diotima in Plato's Symposium: "'He [Love] interprets,' she replied, 'between gods and men'" (New York: Scribner, 1907, 153). In a letter to Geoffrey Faber of 10 May 1936, TSE remarks: "I don't hold with the Myth of Diotima either – that is merely a statement of the 'illusion.'"

26. "Le silence eternel des ces espaces infinis m'effraie"; *trans*: "The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me." *Pascal's Pensées*, trans. W. F. Trotter, intro. T. S. Eliot (London: Dent, 1931), 61.

27. In "Religion and Science: A Phantom Dilemma" (1932), TSE states that he had read Jeans's *The Mysterious Universe* (1930) "with pleasure and I hope profit" (4.440).

28. TSE presumably refers to H. G. Wells's *The Outline of History*, 3 vols (1920), subtitled either "The Whole Story of Man" or "Being a Plain History of Life and Mankind." Wells reprised his *Outline* in 1922 with a much shorter popular work, *A Short History of the World*, and two long efforts, *The Science of Life* (1930) and *The Work, Wealth and Happiness of Mankind* (1931). In "Popular Theologians" (1927), TSE remarks: "Mr. Wells has not an historical mind; he has a prodigious gift of historical imagination" (3.64).

29. *Read*: "The enormity of his ignorance." *Practical Criticism*, 291.

30. Richards provides various "Senses of Knowledge" (as Response; as Participation; as Involving a Unique Relation or Act; as Reflection; and Special Senses) in *Mencius on the Mind* (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1932), 105-11.

31. TSE's discusses *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola* (composed 1522-24) in his 1926 Clark Lectures. In "Thinking in Verse: A Survey of early Seventeenth-Century Poetry" (1930), TSE describes Ignatius as "a great saint and a very great man indeed" (4.50).

32. Russell wrote "A Free Man's Worship" in 1902; it was republished in his collection of essays *Mysticism and Logic* (1918). TSE reviews this volume in "Style and Thought" (1918) (1.690).

33. *Science and Poetry*, 60. Richards first develops his theory of the "pseudo-statement" in his *Criterion* article "A Background for Contemporary Poetry" for July 1925 (511-28).

34*. TSE's note: "Somewhat in the spirit of 'religion without revelation,' of which a greater exponent than Mr. Julian Huxley was Emmanuel Kant. On Kant's attempt (which deeply influenced later German theology) see an illuminating passage in A. E. Taylor's *The Faith of a Moralist*, vol. ii, chap. ii." Taylor's *The Faith of a Moralist* (1930) articulates a religiously oriented morality. On 1 Jan 1930, TSE wrote to Anglo-Catholic Taylor, whose books on Aristotle, Plato, and Epicurus he taught in "Philosophy A" at Harvard in 1913 (1.776), to say that: "Your attitude on theological matters is so close to my own" (*L5* 4).

35*. TSE's note: "There were also some interesting articles in *The New Republic* by Mr. Edmund Wilson, in controversy (if I remember correctly) with Mr. Michael Gold. I regret that I cannot give the exact reference. The major part of Trotsky's book is not very interesting for those who are unacquainted with the modern Russian authors: one suspects that most of Trotsky's swans are geese." TSE discusses Trotsky's *Literature and Revolution* (first published in 1924) in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Jan 1933 (4.508). TSE refers to Edward Wilson's two-part article "The Literary Class War" in the *New Republic* (4 and 11 May 1932, 319-23; 347-49), which responded to the advocacy of Trotsky by American intellectuals. Michael Gold was the pen-name of the Jewish American writer and Communist, Itzok Isaac Granich (1894-1967), author of *Jews without Money* (1930) and founding editor of the radical magazine *New Masses*.

36. *Literature and Revolution*, trans. Rose Strunsky (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1925), 179.

37*. TSE's note: "The Roman and Communist idea of an index of prohibited books seems to me perfectly sound in principle. It is a question (a) of the goodness and universality of the cause, (b) of the intelligence that goes to the application."

38†. The 1933 edition contained this note by TSE (removed from the 1964 edition): "With the influence of the devil on contemporary literature I shall be concerned in more detail in another book." At this time, TSE was preparing his 1933 Page-Barbour lectures for publication as *After Strange Gods: A Primer of Modern Heresy*.

39. TSE's translation of this passage in part two of "Poetry and Religion" (*Criterion*, 5, May 1927) reads: "By showing us where moral truth and the authentic supernatural are, religion spares poetry the error of thinking it was made to transform ethics and life; protects it against presumption" (218).

40*. TSE's note: "Which does not seem to me to cover the case. Let us say that it was the primary motive (even in *Athalie*). An exact statement would need much space; for we cannot concern ourselves only with what went on inside the poet's head, but with the general state of society." In "Prologue to an Essay on Criticism," which TSE translated in the *Criterion* for Jan 1928, Charles Maurras asserts: "Racine wrote *Athalie, Phèdre, le Cantique spirituel* according to principles of taste which he had in common with Sophocles and Horace."

41. Henri Brémond, *Prayer and Poetry*, trans. Algar Thorold (London: Burns, Oates and Washburne, 1927), 189.

42. *Anima Poetae: From the Unpublished Note-Books of Samuel Taylor Coleridge*, ed. Ernest Hartley Coleridge (London: Heinemann, 1895), 5. In *The Name and Nature of Poetry*, Housman reflects on this quotation: "and perfect understanding will sometimes almost extinguish pleasure" (Cambridge UP, 1933), 37.

43. *Autobiographies: Reveries over Childhood and Youth and The Trembling of the Veil* (1926) contains accounts of Yeats's occult and hermetic studies.

44*. TSE's note: "The best analysis of the weakness of Mr. Yeats's poetry that I know is in Mr. Richards's *Science and Poetry*. But I do not think that Mr. Richards quite appreciated Mr. Yeats's later work." Richards describes Yeats's early poetry as an escape from the modern world, and his later work as "a more violent repudiation, not merely of current civilisation but of life itself, in favour of a supernatural world" (*Science and Poetry*, 86).

45. In "The Minor Metaphysicals: From Cowley to Dryden" (1930), TSE characterizes the poetry of Rochester and Sedley as descending from the poetry of Lovelace (4.000).

Lecture VIII

Conclusion

March 31st, 1933

I hope that I have not given the impression, in this cursory review of theories past and present, that I estimate the value of such theories according to their degree of approximation to some doctrine which I hold myself, and pay them off accordingly. I am too well aware of limitations of interest for which I do not apologise, and of incapacity for abstruse reasoning as well as less pardonable shortcomings. I have no general theory of my own; but on the other hand I would not appear to dismiss the views of others with the indifference which the practitioner may be supposed to feel towards those who theorise about his craft. It is reasonable, I feel, to be on guard against views which claim too much for poetry, as well as to protest against those which claim too little; to recognise a number of uses for poetry, without admitting that poetry must always and everywhere be subservient to any one of them. And while theories of poetry may be tested by their power of refining our sensibility by increasing our understanding, we must not ask that they serve even that purpose of adding to our enjoyment of poetry: any more than we ask of ethical theory that it shall have a direct application to and influence upon human behaviour. Critical speculation, like philosophical speculation and scientific research, must be free to follow its own course; and cannot be called upon to show immediate results; and I believe that the pondering (in judicious moderation) of the questions which it raises will tend to enhance our enjoyment.

That there is an analogy between mystical experience and some of the ways in which poetry is written I do not deny; and I think that the Abbé Brémond has observed very well the differences as well as the likenesses; though, as I have said, whether the analogy is of significance for the student of religion, or only to the psychologist, I do not know. I know, for instance, that some forms of ill-health, debility or anaemia, may (if other circumstances are favourable) produce an efflux of poetry in a way approaching the condition of automatic writing – though, in contrast to the claims sometimes made for the latter, the material has obviously been incubating within the poet, and cannot be suspected of being a present from a friendly or impertinent demon. What one writes in this way may succeed in standing the examination of a more normal state of mind; it gives me the impression, as I have just said, of having undergone a long incubation, though we do not know until the shell breaks what kind of egg we have been sitting on. To me it seems that at these moments, which are characterised by the sudden lifting of the burden of anxiety and fear which presses upon our daily life so steadily that we are unaware of it, what happens is something *negative*: that is to say, not "inspiration" as we commonly think of it, but the breaking down of strong habitual barriers – which tend to re-form very quickly.[1*] Some obstruction is momentarily whisked away. The accompanying feeling is less like what we know as positive pleasure, than a sudden relief from an intolerable burden.

I agree with Brémond, and perhaps go even further, in finding that this disturbance of our quotidian character which results in an incantation, an outburst of words which we hardly recognise as our own (because of the effortlessness), is a very different thing from mystical illumination. The latter is a vision which may be accompanied by the realisation that you will never be able to communicate it to anyone else, or even by the realisation that when it is past you will not be able to recall it to yourself; the former is not a vision but a motion terminating in an arrangement of words on paper.

But I should add one reservation. I should hesitate to say that the experience at which I have hinted is responsible for the creation of all the most profound poetry written, or even always of the best of a single poet's work. For all I know, it may have much more significance for the psychologist's understanding of a particular poet, or of one poet in a certain phase, than it has for anyone's understanding of poetry. Some finer minds, indeed, may operate very differently; I cannot think of Shakespeare or Dante as having been dependent upon such capricious releases. Perhaps this throws no light on poetry at all. I am not even sure that the poetry which I have written in this way is the best that I have written; and so far as I know, no critic has ever identified the passages I have in mind. The way in which poetry is written is not, so far as our knowledge of these obscure matters as yet extends, any clue to its value. But, as Norton wrote in a letter to Dr. L. P. Jacks in 1907, "I have no belief that such views as mine are likely within any reasonable time to be held by a considerable body of men"; for people are always ready to grasp at any guide which will help them to recognise the best poetry without having to depend upon their own sensibility and taste.[2] The faith in mystical inspiration is responsible for the exaggerated repute of *Kubla Khan*.[3] The imagery of that fragment, certainly, whatever its origins in Coleridge's reading, sank to the depths of Coleridge's feeling, was saturated, transformed there – "those are pearls that were his eyes"[4] – and brought up into daylight again. But it is not *used*: the poem has not been written. A single verse is not poetry unless it is a one-verse poem; and even the finest line draws its life from its context. Organisation is necessary as well as "inspiration." The re-creation of word and image which happens fitfully in the poetry of such a poet as Coleridge happens almost incessantly with Shakespeare. Again and again, in his use of a word, he will give a new meaning or extract a latent one; again and again the right imagery, saturated while it lay in the depths of Shakespeare's memory, will rise like Anadyomene from the sea.[5] In Shakespeare's poetry this reborn image or word will have its rational use and justification; in much good poetry the organisation will not reach to so rational a level. I will take an example which I have used elsewhere: I am glad of the opportunity to use it again, as on the previous occasion I had an inaccurate text.[6] It is from Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois*:

> Fly where the evening from the Iberian vales
> Takes on her swarthy shoulders Hecate
> Crowned with a grove of oaks: fly where men feel
> The burning axletree, and those that suffer
> Beneath the chariot of the snowy Bear. . . .

Chapman borrowed this, as Dr. Boas points out, from Seneca's *Hercules Œteus*:[7]*

> dic sub Aurora positis Sabaeis
> dic sub occasu positis Hiberis
> quique sub plaustro patiuntur ursae
> quique ferventi quatiuntur axe

and probably also from the same author's *Hercules Furens*:

> sub ortu solis, an sub cardine
> glacialis ursae?

There is first the probability that this imagery had some personal saturation value, so to speak, for Seneca; another for Chapman, and another for myself, who have borrowed it twice from Chapman.[8] I suggest that what gives it such intensity as it has in each case is its saturation – I will not say with "associations," for I do not want to revert to Hartley – but with feelings too obscure for the authors even to know quite what they were.[9] And of course only a part of an author's imagery comes from his reading. It comes from the whole of his sensitive life since early childhood. Why, for all of us, out of all that we have heard, seen, felt, in a lifetime, do certain images recur, charged with emotion, rather than others? The song of one bird, the leap of one fish, at a particular place and time, the scent of one flower, an old woman on a German mountain path, six ruffians seen through an open window playing cards at night at a small French railway junction where there was a water-mill: such memories may have symbolic value, but of what we cannot tell, for they come to represent the depths of feeling into which we cannot peer. We might just as well ask why, when we try to recall visually some period in the past, we find in our memory just the few meagre arbitrarily chosen set of snapshots that we do find there, the faded poor souvenirs of passionate moments.[10]*

Thus far is as far as my experience will take me in this direction. My purpose has not been to examine thoroughly any one type of theory of poetry, still less to confute it; but rather to indicate the kinds of defect and excess that we must expect to find in each, and to suggest that the current tendency is to expect too much, rather than too little, of poetry. No one of us, when he thinks about poetry, is without his own bias; and Abbé Brémond's preoccupation with mysticism and Mr. Richards's lack of interest in theology are equally significant. One voice was raised, in our time, to express a view of a different kind; that of a man who wrote several remarkable poems himself, and who also had an aptitude for theology. It is that of T. E. Hulme:

> There is a general tendency to think that verse means little else than the expression of unsatisfied emotion. People say: "But how can you have verse without sentiment?" You see what it is; the prospect alarms them. A classical revival to them would mean the prospect of an arid desert and the death of poetry as they understand it, and could only come to fill the gap caused by that death. Exactly why this dry classical spirit should have a positive and legitimate necessity to express itself in poetry is utterly inconceivable to them. . . . The great aim is accurate, precise and definite description. The first thing is to recognise how extraordinarily difficult this is. . . . Language has its own special nature, its own conventions and communal ideas. It is only by a concentrated effort of the mind that you can hold it fixed to your own purpose.[11]

This is, we must remark at once, not a general theory of poetry, but an assertion of the claims of a particular kind of poetry for the writer's own time. It may serve to remind us how various are the kinds of poetry, and how variously poetry may appeal to different minds and generations equally qualified to appreciate it.

The extreme of theorising about the nature of poetry, the essence of poetry if there is any, belongs to the study of aesthetics and is no concern of the poet or of a critic with my limited qualifications. Whether the self-consciousness involved in aesthetics and in psychology does not risk violating the frontier of consciousness, is a question which I need not raise here; it is perhaps only my private eccentricity to believe that such researches are perilous if not guided by sound theology. The poet is much more vitally concerned with the social "uses" of poetry, and with his own place in society; and this problem is now perhaps more importunately pressed upon his conscious attention than at any previous time. The uses of poetry certainly vary as society alters, as the public to be addressed changes. In this context something should be said about the vexed question of obscurity and unintelligibility. The difficulty of poetry (and modern poetry is supposed to be difficult) may be due to one of several reasons. First, there may be personal causes which make it impossible for a poet to express himself in any but an obscure way; while this may be regrettable, we should be glad, I think, that the man has been able to express himself at all. Or difficulty may be due just to novelty: we know the ridicule accorded in turn to Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats, Tennyson and Browning – but must remark that Browning was the first to be *called* difficult; hostile critics of the earlier poets found them difficult, but called them silly.[12] Or difficulty may be caused by the reader's having been told, or having suggested to himself, that the poem is going to prove difficult. The ordinary reader, when warned against the obscurity of a poem, is apt to be thrown into a state of consternation very unfavourable to poetic receptivity. Instead of beginning, as he should, in a state of sensitivity, he obfuscates his senses by the desire to be clever and to look very hard for something, he doesn't know what – or else by the desire not to be taken in. There is such a thing as stage fright, but what such readers have is pit or gallery fright. The more seasoned reader, he who has reached, in these matters, a state of greater *purity*, does not bother about understanding; not, at least, at first. I know that some of the poetry to which I am most devoted is poetry which I did not understand at first reading; some is poetry which I am not sure I understand yet: for instance, Shakespeare's. And finally, there is the difficulty caused by the author's having left out something which the reader is used to finding; so that the reader, bewildered, gropes about for what is absent, and puzzles his head for a kind of "meaning" which is not there, and is not meant to be there.

The chief use of the "meaning" of a poem, in the ordinary sense, may be (for here again I am speaking of some kinds of poetry and not all) to satisfy one habit of the reader, to keep his mind diverted and quiet, while the poem does its work upon him: much as the imaginary burglar is always provided with a bit of nice meat for the house-dog. This is a normal situation of which I approve. But the minds of all poets do not work that way; some of them, assuming that there are other minds like their own, become impatient of this "meaning" which seems superfluous, and perceive possibilities of intensity through its elimination. I am not asserting that this situation is ideal; only that we must write our poetry as we can, and take it as we find it. It may be that for some periods of society a more relaxed form of writing is right, and for others a more concentrated. I believe that there must be many people who feel, as I do, that the effect of some of the greater nineteenth-century poets is diminished by their bulk. Who now, for the pure pleasure of it, reads Wordsworth, Shelley and Keats even, certainly Browning and Swinburne and most of the French poets of the century – entire? I by no means believe that the "long poem" is a thing of the past; but at least there must be more in it for the length than our grandparents seemed to demand; and for us, anything that can be said as well in prose can be said better in prose. And a great deal, in the way of meaning, belongs to prose rather than to poetry. The doctrine of "art for art's sake," a mistaken one, and more advertised than practised, contained this true impulse behind it, that it is a recognition of the error of the poet's trying to do other people's work.[13] But poetry has as much to learn from prose as from other poetry; and I think that an interaction between prose and verse, like the interaction between language and language, is a condition of vitality in literature.

To return to the question of obscurity: when all exceptions have been made, and after admitting the possible existence of minor "difficult" poets whose public must always be small, I believe that the poet naturally prefers to write for as large and miscellaneous an audience as possible, and that it is the half-educated and ill-educated, rather than the uneducated, who stand in his way: I myself should like an audience which could neither read nor write.[14]* The most useful poetry, socially, would be one which could cut across all the present stratifications of public taste – stratifications which are perhaps a sign of social disintegration. The ideal medium for poetry, to my mind, and the most direct means of social "usefulness" for poetry, is the theatre. In a play of Shakespeare you get several levels of significance. For the simplest auditors there is the plot, for the more thoughtful the character and conflict of character, for the more literary the words and phrasing, for the more musically sensitive the rhythm, and for auditors of greater sensitiveness and understanding a meaning which reveals itself gradually. And I do not believe that the classification of audience is so clear-cut as this; but rather that the sensitiveness of every auditor is acted upon by all these elements at once, though in different degrees of consciousness. At none of these levels is the auditor bothered by the presence of that which he does not understand, or by the presence of that in which he is not interested. I may make my meaning a little clearer by a simple instance. I once designed, and drafted a couple of scenes, of a verse play.[15] My intention was to have one character whose sensibility and intelligence should be on the plane of the most sensitive and intelligent members of the audience; his speeches should be addressed to them as much as to the others personages in the play – or rather, should be addressed to the latter, who were to be material, literal-minded and visionless, with the consciousness of being overheard by the former. There was to be an understanding between this protagonist and a small number of the audience, while the rest of the audience would share the responses of the other characters in the play. Perhaps this is all too deliberate, but one must experiment as one can.

Every poet would like, I fancy, to be able to think that he had some direct social utility. By this, as I hope I have already made clear, I do not mean that he should meddle with the tasks of the theologian, the preacher, the economist, the sociologist or anybody else; that he should do anything but write poetry, poetry not defined in terms of something else. He would like to be something of a popular entertainer, and be able to think his own thoughts behind a tragic or a comic mask. He would like to convey the pleasures of poetry, not only to a larger audience, but to larger groups of people collectively; and the theatre is the best place in which to do it. There might, one fancies, be some fulfilment in exciting this communal pleasure, to give an immediate compensation for the pains of turning blood into ink. As things are, and as fundamentally they must always be, poetry is not a career, but a mug's game. No honest poet can ever feel quite sure of the permanent value of what he has written: he may have wasted his time and messed up his life for nothing. All the better, then, if he could have at least the satisfaction of having a part to play in society as worthy as that of the music-hall comedian. Furthermore, the theatre, by the technical exactions which it makes and limitations which it imposes upon the author, by the obligation to keep for a definite length of time the sustained interest of a large and unprepared and not wholly perceptive group of people, by its problems which have constantly to be solved, has enough to keep the poet's *conscious* mind fully occupied, as the painter's by the manipulation of his tools. If, beyond keeping the interest of a crowd of people for that length of time, the author can make a play which is real poetry, so much the better.

I have not attempted any definition of poetry, because I can think of none which does not assume that the reader already knows what it is, or which does not falsify by leaving out much more than it can include. Poetry begins, I dare say, with a savage beating a drum in a jungle, and it retains that essential of percussion and rhythm; hyperbolically one might say that the poet is *older* than other human beings – but I do not want to be tempted to ending on this sort of flourish. I have insisted rather on the variety of poetry, variety so great that all the kinds seem to have nothing in common except the rhythm of verse instead of the rhythm of prose: and that does not tell you much about all poetry. Poetry is of course not to be defined by its uses. If it commemorates a public occasion, or celebrates a festival, or decorates a religious rite, or amuses a crowd, so much the better. It may effect revolutions in sensibility such as are periodically needed; may help to break up the conventional modes of perception and valuation which are perpetually forming, and make people see the world afresh, or some new part of it. It may make us from time to time a little more aware of the deeper, unnamed feelings which form the substratum of our being, to which we rarely penetrate; for our lives are mostly a constant evasion of ourselves, and an evasion of the visible and sensible world. But to say all this is only to say what you know already, if you have felt poetry and thought about your feelings. And I fear that I have already, throughout these lectures, trespassed beyond the bounds which a little self-knowledge tells me are my proper frontier. If, as James Thomson observed, "lips only sing when they cannot kiss," it may also be that poets only talk when they cannot sing.[16] I am content to leave my theorising about poetry at this point. The sad ghost of Coleridge beckons to me from the shadows.

NOTES

1*. TSE's note: "I should like to quote a confirmation of my own experience from Mr. A. E. Housman's *Name and Nature of Poetry*: 'In short I think that the production of poetry, in its first stage, is less an active than a passive and involuntary process; and if I were obliged, not to define poetry, but to name the class of things to which it belongs, I should call it a secretion; whether a natural secretion, like turpentine in the fir, or a morbid secretion, like the pearl in the oyster. I think that my own case, though I may not deal with the matter so cleverly as the oyster does, is the latter; because I have seldom written poetry unless I was rather out of health, and the experience, though pleasurable, was generally agitating and exhausting.' I take added satisfaction in the fact that I only read Mr. Housman's essay some time after my own lines were written." *The Name and Nature of Poetry* (Cambridge UP, 1933), 48-49. TSE read Housman's book upon his return to the UK.

2. Letter of 24 Sept 1907; *Letters of Charles Eliot Norton*, vol 2 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 383. See "Popular Theologians" (1927) for TSE's comments on *The Faiths: Varieties of Christian Expression* (1926), ed. L. P. Jacks (3.68-69, n.10).

3. According to Coleridge's Preface to *Kubla Khan*, the poem was composed one night in 1797 in an opium-induced dream after reading a work describing Xanadu, the summer palace of the Mongol Emperor of China, Kublai Khan. Upon waking, Coleridge set about writing but was interrupted by a person from Porlock; the poem could not be completed according to its original plan, as the interruption caused him to forget the lines. Coleridge left it unpublished and kept it for private readings until, on the prompting of Byron, it was published in 1816.

4. From Ariel's song in *The Tempest* I.ii.399, quoted by TSE as lines 48 and 125 of *The Waste Land*.

5. Venus Anadyomene (Venus Rising from the Sea). One of the iconic representations of Aphrodite, made famous in a painting by Apelles, now lost, but described in Pliny's Natural History, with the anecdote that Apelles employed Campaspe, a mistress of Alexander the Great, for his model. According to Athenaeus, the idea of Aphrodite rising from the sea was inspired by the courtesan Phryne, who, during the time of the festivals, often swam naked in the sea.

6. In "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry [IV]" (1919), "Donne's Longer Poems" (1926), "Seneca in Elizabethan Translation" (1927), and "Thinking in Verse" (1930), TSE quoted these lines from the inaccurate text in his copy of the 1904 issue of W. L. Phelp's Mermaid edition of *George Chapman* (1895); see, respectively, 2.67, 2.695, 3.201, and 4.46.

7. English scholar Frederick S. Boas (1862-1957) of Queen's College, Belfast, states in the preface to his edition of Chapman's *Bussy D'Ambois and The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois* (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1905), that the passage from Bussy's dying speech in *Bussy D'Ambois* (V.iv.102-06) is adapted from the following lines of Hercules's last agony in Seneca's *Hercules Œtus* (1521-24), "the identification, here first made" (iii, 163n).

8. The lines from *Hercules furens* (1139-40), are spoken by Hercules when he awakens from sleep after killing his wife and children to ask where he is: [*trans*: "Under the rising of the sun or beneath the wheeling course of the frozen Bear?"] TSE adapted the lines in "Gerontion" ("whirled / Beyond the circuit of the shuddering Bear") and quoted the line directly preceding – "Quis hic locus, quae regio, quae mundi plaga?" [What place is this, what region, or of the world what coast?] as the epigraph for "Marina."

9. TSE refers to the eighteenth-century physician David Hartley's role in theorizing the "association of ideas."

10*. TSE's note: "In chapter xxii of *Principles of Literary Criticism* Mr. Richards discusses these matters in his own way. As evidence that there are other approaches as well, see a very interesting article 'Le symbolisme et l'âme primitive' by E. Cailliet and J. A. Bédé in the *Revue de littérature comparée* for April-June 1932 [356-76]. The authors, who have done field-work in Madagascar, apply the theories of Lévy-Bruhl: the pre-logical mentality persists in civilised man, but becomes available only to or through the poet."

In Chapter 12 of *Principles of Literary Criticism*, Richards examines "The Availability of the Poet's Experience"; Émile Cailliet and Jean-Albert Bédé were influenced by Lévy-Bruhl's work on "primitive" ritual, which TSE incorporated into his 1913 graduate essay on "The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual" (1.106).

11. *Speculations: Essays on Humanism and the Philosophy of Art*, ed. Herbert Read (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1924), 127-28, 132.

12. In an unsigned review on "Robert Browning's Poems," Richard Hengist Horne disparaged Browning's historical poem *Sordello* (1840) as a "modern hieroglyphic" (*The Church of England Quarterly*, Oct 1842, 464-83).

13. In "Arnold and Pater" (1930), TSE discusses the derivation of the concept of "art for art's sake" in Arnold and its formulation in Pater (4.182).

14*. TSE's note: "On the subject of education, there are some helpful remarks in Lawrence's *Fantasia of the Unconscious*." In *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (1922), Lawrence, a former school-teacher, offers a new education for children as well as sexual education for adults founded on individual fulfillment. Reviewing Middleton Murry's critical biography of Lawrence in the *Criterion* for July 1931, TSE remarked of *Fantasia of the Unconscious*: "It would appear that in this book Lawrence reached his culmination, and that his subsequent work marks chiefly decline and collapse" (4.317). In 1933, TSE told his Harvard students in English 26 that *Fantasia of the Unconscious* provided insight into "mother-love" (4.790).

15. *Sweeney Agonistes: Fragments of an Aristophanic Melodrama* (1932) was first performed at Vassar College in May 1933.

16. From section III of "Art" (1865), *The Life and Poetry of James Thomson* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1917), 66.

The Bible as Scripture and as Literature

TSE read his unpublished address before the Women's Alliance, King's Chapel (Christian Unitarian), Boston, on 1 Dec 1932. The minister, Rev. John Carroll Perkins, whom TSE knew through the Perkins's niece Emily Hale, wrote to him on 11 Aug 1932: "Emily Hale tells me that you are good enough to come to the King's Chapel one day next winter and review with our Women's Alliance the poetry of the Bible, if that is your subject. Although I am not a member of the Alliance I somehow assume responsibility in the church to be very grateful to you for your generosity." TSE replied from London on 29 Aug that he "accepted the honour of speaking at King's Chapel . . . It will be a great pleasure for me, and I hope to prepare a satisfactory address. I look forward to renewing my acquaintance with Mrs. Perkins and yourself during my stay at Harvard."

> And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon. Revelation V. iv.

I shall not detain you with any account of Bunyan, Abraham Lincoln, or of all the famous men who are said to have been reared in humble circumstances and to have formed their style of writing upon the Bible alone. I will presume you to be familiar with these tales.[1] Nor shall I waste your time by generally affirming that the Bible of the Authorised Version is the greatest masterpiece of English literature. As a matter of fact, from the point of view of literature there is no Bible. There is merely a compilation of the records and the literature of the Hebrews up to a certain time; followed by the four gospels, some highly technical and difficult theological treatises by a few apostles, and ending up with a magnificent specimen of what is known to scholars as vision literature. There is not even a "Biblical style"; there is only the artificial arrangement of verses which imposes a deceptive uniformity – yet which I, for my part, have no wish to abandon. The fact that the Bible was translated by forty-seven collaborators working at the same time, when the English language was in a distinct phase which is not ours, also helps to suggest the illusion of a Biblical style. From the point of view of literature there is a good deal of folk lore, compilations of laws, some of them concerned with sanitation, and of not much greater literary interest than other well-framed legislation, some beautifully written history, some very fine lyric poetry, a very great drama – Job – and a few very great writers such as Isaiah.

But for my own part I find it very hard to take this point of view. I cannot say, when sitting down to read a part of the Bible, "Now I am going to read the Bible because it is the foundation of our Christian faith," and the next evening, "Now I am going to have a go at the Bible as literature." You will observe usually that those who talk about the Bible as literature choose most of their illustrations, unless they be merely of a phrase or two, from the Old Testament. I suspect this to indicate, among other things, that it is easiest to enjoy as "literature" those parts of the Bible in which it is most easy to suspend definitely Christian belief. People do not talk so much about the literary accomplishment of St. Paul, who is, as I have said, not suitable for light reading; and I confess to a feeling of profanation if I hear the Sermon on the Mount spoken of as "great literature." To me it seems that these are too serious matters. I am not prepared to discuss the literary merits of the discourses of Our Lord, or His felicitous use of homely illustrations in a way suited to the capacity of his hearers. Now this is with me a perfectly distinct feeling; the whole of the Four Gospels are quite definitely dissociated from anything else that has ever been written, copied, typed or printed. I cannot even think of them as a model for writing, except as a model for writing gospels; and none of us, has been called to that high vocation except Mrs. Eddy; and Mrs. Eddy does not strike me as a very happy example of the influence of the Bible upon literature – if there was any influence at all.[2]

I have said that from the point of view of literature there is no Bible; but also, from the point of view of those whose feeling about the Bible is similar to mine – and that is by no means a foursquare fundamentalism – it might almost be said that there is no literature. It is very difficult to refute the Caliph Omar, who, I understand, commanded the destruction of the library of Alexandria with the observation that if the books in it said the same thing as the Koran, they were superfluous, and if they said anything different, they ought to be burnt, except by the perhaps rather carping criticism that he chose the wrong book.[3] I mean only, to be more serious, that my feeling about the gospels extends in varying degrees to other parts of the Bible. So far as actual borrowing and allusions go, my inclination is always to applaud those who have read the Bible as the Bible, and to frown at those who have read it as literature. For instance, Swinburne's "Aholibah" and his "Burden of Tyre" (I am not sure that that is the title, but I mean the poem in which he borrows so generously from Isaiah),[4] leave an unpleasant taste in my mouth (like the book which was sweet as honey in the eating, but bitter in the stomach);[5] nor do I ever feel quite at ease with either Swinburne or Kipling in their Biblical manner; they are, I feel, poets who have been reading the Bible as literature. With Bunyan, as you may imagine, I have no quarrel.

But although I object to people talking about the Bible as literature, and although I object to their mining in the Bible for poetic material for purely secular purposes, I am still interested in the influence of the Bible upon English poetry. Here I may be allowed to interpolate an answer to a possible objection. Some years ago, in writing of Dante, I upheld the theory that it was not necessary to believe what Dante believed – that is to say, to be a Catholic of either the thirteenth or the twentieth century – in order to enjoy his poetry; although in order to enjoy it fully you ought to understand what he believed, to know what he knew.[6] Some one might turn this against me, and say that consequently it should not be necessary to believe what a Christian believes, in order to appreciate the poetry or the literature of the Bible. But what I have tried to affirm is no contradiction of that. Dante belongs to literature, and as such may be criticised as literature and enjoyed as literature. St. Thomas belongs to philosophy as well as to theology and may be criticised and enjoyed as such. But there is a class of books – not indeed a very large class, for although we admit the Koran as well as the Bible and the works of Swedenborg and Mrs. Eddy – we must except the canonical literature of Buddhism and Confucianism – which is the class of religious revelation; and the book which happens for you, according to whether you are a Christian (plain or Swedonborgian)[7] or a Christian scientist or a Moslem, to be a book of revelation is just outside of literary pleasure or literary opinion. I never said, indeed, that it made no difference whether you believed what Dante believed or not; I only said that it made no difference to your enjoyment of it as poetry; and after all, it was written to be enjoyed as poetry.[8] But I am firmly convinced that it does make a difference, whether you treat the Bible as the revelation of the faith delivered to the saints, or whether you treat it as (in part) poetry; you cannot be on both sides of the fence at once; and I only wished to make quite clear which side I am on.

Although I do not think that the influence of the Bible upon English literature can fairly be dissociated from belief – that is, I believe that it would never have had any significant influence at all unless people had believed it – I am by no means belittling this influence. I also believe that the literary influence of the English Bible has been greater than that of any other translation of the Bible upon the literature of any other language. It is perhaps unfortunate that the greatest period of German literature came after the influence of the Bible had begun to wane; and the greatest of her men of letters, Goethe, can hardly be called a Christian at all.[9] The reason for the slight influence of the Bible upon the vernacular of Latin countries is too obvious to need mention. Now, I am totally unacquainted with Hebrew; yet I believe that even a person so ignorant as that can affirm with some confidence that the influence is not primarily due to the skill of the translators, but to the greatness of the poetry itself and also to its eminent translatability. As a great deal of the finest of Elizabethan literature was written before the appearance of the Authorised Version in 1611, we must allow the possibility of the earlier translations having themselves exerted some influence and also the possibility that English literature did not wholly depend upon the Bible. We allow within the scope of Biblical influences the prose of the great divines of the sixteenth century. I sometimes think that our debt to Cranmer can hardly be exaggerated. We owe much to the sermons, in a meaner style, but still dignified and forceful, of Latimer;[10] but to Cranmer we owe very much more. The prayerbook of 1549 which he composed set the standard for all later English liturgical practice; to my mind it is in several ways superior to the revision of Charles II's; and Lord Halifax has for many years advocated its reinstatement in preference to such attempts as the deposited book of 1927 and 1928.[11] However much our language owes to the regular reading aloud of Bible passages in private families – as for instance described in "The Cotter's Saturday Night"[12] – I think that we owe still more to the public repetition of the liturgy. Today, when we have so much more reading matter (and so much in which little Biblical influence is directly apparent) and so many more diversions besides church-going, such an effect is no doubt exercised only upon a small number of persons; but surely, throughout a period of three hundred years or so, and especially during the earlier part of that time, when the language was in quicker process of formation, the regular audition of the lessons, the collects and the prayers, must have produced a gentle and insensible saturation of the minds not only of the truly devout, but of all the steady congregation, with the beauty of some of the finest sentences and periods in the whole of English prose. The fall of these words upon the ear, as they follow their due and appointed order in the service and the cyclic recurrence of the services according to the seasons, enters into the whole rhythm of the Christian's life with an unconscious compulsion. The rhythm of life is deeper than the rhythm of prose or of verse; in the metric in which a man lives, if he is a good writer, so will he write; and the style of the Church collects is different from that of Mr. Ernest Hemingway.[13]

I have not, unfortunately, been able to take the time to prepare a few specimens of the translations of Tyndale and Coverdale.[14] I may remark that although inferior to the Authorised versions in style, as well as less accurate in translation, these translations are of no small merit; and their general resemblances are no less interesting than their particular differences. And you can hardly help feeling that the resemblance is due largely to the dominance of the rhythm of the original. I am well aware that while the Hebrew of the Old Testament, in spite of the various periods at which the books were written, is all of "the classical period," the Greek of the New Testament is not "classical Greek," and that prudent schoolmasters do not let their boys read it until they are adept enough to recognise its inferiority. I was never myself sufficiently accomplished in Greek prose composition for such contamination to have made any difference to me.[15] The Gospels would dignify any language, and their style is greater than any language. Yet we may venture diffidently to say that they gain in one respect in translation, in that the language into which they are translated is classical English. I admire (to take an example not from the Gospels but from the Acts),[16†]

> [καὶ ἐλιθοβόλουν τὸν Στέφανον ἐπικαλούμενον καὶ λέγοντα Κύριε Ιησοῦ δέξαι τὸ πνεῦμά μου θεὶς δὲ τὰ γόνατα ἔκραξεν φωνῇ μεγάλῃ Κύριε μὴ στήσῃς αὐτοῖς τὴν ἁμαρτίαν ταύτην καὶ τοῦτο εἰπὼν ἐκοιμήθη]

but still more

> And they stoned Stephen, calling upon God, and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And he kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep. [KJV]

which I prefer to the version given in the Roman Missal used in England (Adrian Fortescue's edition):

> And they stoned Stephen, invoking and saying, Lord Jesus, receive my spirit. And falling on his knees, he cried with a loud voice, saying: Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep in the Lord.[17]

The differences are slight, but important. "Calling upon God" is stronger than "invoking," and no less accurate as a translation; "kneeled down" is more to my mind than "falling on his knees"; and "he fell asleep" is closer to [ἐκοιμήθη][18] than the superfluity of explanation of "he fell asleep in the Lord."

In mentioning the influence of Cranmer and the liturgy upon English literature, I should perhaps have mentioned the possible – rather than the actual – influence of books of private devotion. There are not very many of first rate merit originally composed in this language; and I am quite sure, though I have never made the attempt, that there can hardly be any form of composition more difficult. First a prodigious memory and knowledge of the Bible, to which should be added if possible an intimate knowledge of Christian liturgy from the earliest times; to this especially a happy faculty of invention which assembles the traditional and memorable phrases in a suitable and striking manner. (Extempore prayer, which Prebendary Harris in the recent commentary *Liturgy and Worship* believes to have been used from very early times in the Sacrament and Extreme Unction, is a considerable art in itself.)[19] In the book which I have just mentioned parenthetically, Dr. Milner-White observes:

> . . . away from the language of Bible, Prayer Book, or some approximation to their standard, the Englishman is never comfortable for long in public prayer. It has not been so generally noticed that this feeling has influenced private devotion also, and that here again the Carolines set a decisive example. The devotions of Laud and of Cosin are both marked by a terse "Prayer Book" atmosphere. They consist largely of definitely constructed prayers. Their liturgical type and descent from the mediaeval Primers are further emphasised by provision for daily observance of the "Lesser Hours," Cosin's with a series of complete Offices, Laud's with a group of three prayers for each "Hour." Laud again builds his devotions pre-eminently upon the Psalms. Cosin, who prepared his Manual at King Charles' request for the ladies of the Court, states definitely the liturgical ideal, "that men, when they set themselves to pray, might know what to say; and avoid, as near as might be, all extemporal effusions of irksome and indigested prayers . . . subject to no good order and form of words."[20]

Dr. Milner-White then goes on to pay a proper tribute to the Private Prayers of Lancelot Andrewes. And in recent times, Pusey's *Private Prayers* should be mentioned.[21]

My original subject that I had in mind, however, was neither the literary qualities of the Bible, nor its past influence upon English literature; but whether, and if so, why, it should have a permanent influence; or, to put it more concretely, of what use and effect is the Bible to a poet of today or tomorrow? It is dangerous to generalise from one's own experience; but one may hope to provide from one's own experience data for the generalisation of some one better qualified to generalise by reason of his not having had the experience. The influence of the Bible upon English literature in the future will be in direct ratio to the extent to which people read the Bible, and read it not as "literature." I believe that I can defend any quotations and allusions that I have made, in this way. It is true that the world of the Old Testament is largely a world of drought. The Hebrews lived in a dry land, in which water is almost always welcome and beneficent; we can hardly consider the Flood as an exception. The properties of water are healing and cleansing to body and soul; and sometimes of special water. "Go and wash in Jordan seven times, and thy flesh shall come again to thee, and thou shalt be clean."[22] And we learn, in another way, from Leviticus what water meant to the Hebrews.[23] But this is simply an illustration of the way in which the imagery of the Old Testament can strike anyone who is impressed by its spirit. You cannot effectively "borrow" an image, unless you borrow also, or have spontaneously, something like the feeling which prompted the original image. An "Image," in itself, is like dream symbolism, is only vigorous in relation to the feelings out of which it issues, in the relation of word to flesh. You are entitled to take it for your own purposes in so far as your fundamental purposes are akin to those of the one who is, for you, the author of the phrase, the inventor of the image; or if you take it for other purposes then your purposes must be consciously and pointedly diverse from those of the author, and the contrast is very much to the point; you may not take it merely because it is a good phrase or a lovely image. I confess that I never felt assured that Henry James was justified in naming a novel *The Golden Bowl*, though my scruples may only show that I have not understood the novel.[24]

Also "when they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the almond tree shall flourish, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail: because man goeth to his long home, and the mourners go about the streets. // Or ever the silver cord be loosed, or the golden bowl be broken, or the pitcher be broken at the fountain, or the wheel broken at the cistern. // Then shall the dust return to the earth as it was; and the spirit shall return to God who gave it . . . // Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter."[25] Now this book of *Ecclesiastes* from which I have just been quoting, and this particular passage in *Ecclesiastes*, come I suppose as near to pure literature or pure poetry as anything in the Bible. We have only the Song of Solomon (which you may prefer to call the Song of Songs)[26] to set with it; for the other highest flights of poetry in the Old Testament – the Psalms and the book of the Prophet Isaiah – are definitely religious first and poetry second. No one could call *Ecclesiastes*, in the exact sense, an inspired book, either in the sense in which Moses as a leader (rather than as an author), or in which the psalmist as a devotional poet, or Isaiah as a prophet, possessed inspiration; which books again are in a different category from the words of Our Lord himself, so different that the word "inspiration" is hardly large enough to cover both the prophets and the writers of the Gospels. I rely upon the support of the author of the article in Bishop Gore's fine *Commentary upon Holy Scripture* who deals with *Ecclesiastes*:

> His outlook is that of many modern popular thinkers and writers; hence the many modern quotations that could be cited. . . . For this reason, the guidance of God's hand is to be seen in the inclusion of Ecclesiastes in the Canon of Scripture. The problems of life which it discusses are extraordinarily modern. Ecclesiastes asked the very questions 2,000 years ago which vex the mind to-day. The book points, in a manner unique in the Old Testament, to the need of the Incarnation, and of that revelation of God's Will and Purpose for man of which the Catholic Church is the inheritor and witness. For obviously the main thought of that book stands in the Bible only to be challenged and refuted.[27]

No one could call this fundamentalism. *Ecclesiastes* is as far from being an inspired book as any that we find in the Bible. I might, had I chosen, have dwelt upon the poetic beauty of the passage that I quoted; of the immediate translation of feeling into image so characteristic of the Hebrew mind; of the art of the juxtaposition of images (so translatable) general such as

> While the sun, or the light, or the moon, or the stars, be not darkened,
> nor the clouds return after the rain:

with the more particular such as

> In the day when the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves, and the grinders cease because they are few, and those that look out of the windows be darkened.

and its final effective juxtaposition with the sudden direct statement,

> Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man.[28]

Now I suspect that those who read Ecclesiastes as literature find that remark to be a moral tag of respectability upon a poem. To me it is the clue of the whole, the final notes which explain the symphony. It helps me to understand why the "literature" which forms the Old Testament is something better than an anthology. In all this great variety of poets there are certain themes which recur again and again; without which recurrence the Old Testament might be just literature. "Fear God, and keep his commandments," is one of these; and it could not appear with greater effect than after the book of Ecclesiastes; and the whole book, with this end, is a reminder that the Church knows more about cynicism and disillusion than the most cynical and disillusioned modern or modernist. I will take another passage which illustrates equally the immediacy of the Hebrew image and another recurrent moral theme: (Isaiah 6):

> In the year that King Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. // Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. // And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of Hosts; the whole earth is full of his glory. // And the posts of the door moved at the voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke. // Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. // Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar; // And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged.[29]

Here again, on a higher level, we have the particular statement (in the year that King Uzziah died) the particular image (each one had six wings) and the theme ("thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin is purged"). The idea of iniquity and of purgation is one of the permanent ideas of Hebrew society. Another of these loading ideas is found in the 130th psalm, so well employed in the liturgy:

> Out of the deep have I called unto thee, O Lord: Lord, hear my voice. // O let thine ears consider well: the voice of my complaint. // If thou, Lord, wilt be extreme to mark what is done amiss: O Lord, who may abide it? // For there is mercy with thee: therefore shalt thou be feared. // I look for the Lord: my soul doth wait for him: in him is my trust. // My soul fleeth unto the Lord: before the morning watch, I spy, before the morning watch.[30]

Here again is the unique union of the particular with the general; and another of the recurrent themes: "my soul fleeth unto the Lord."

I have had for some years, and probably shall have to the end of my life, to read a good deal of bad verse. Religious verse, even very bad religious verse, is the rarest; though there is a good deal which employs religious imagery, or the forms of invocation and supplication, to express emotions which appear to be purely profane. Even the religious verse of the smaller number of devout young poets who emulate Herbert or Crashaw is usually pretty bad; piety and poetry do not always sort together.[31] In this there is no occasion for surprise or sadness. I cannot quite say what conditions, both social and individual, are requisite for the creation of great religious poetry; but I believe that it demands a greater degree of maturity than most people are capable of. We cannot make poetry out of what we should like to feel, nor can we summon up religious feelings for the purpose of writing religious verse. We can only use our strongest and deepest feelings, and we often do not know what those are. I fear that it is not a godly and devout life that will help us to write religious poetry, though I hasten to add that I see no reason to believe that a life of dissipation should prove a better stimulant. Nothing can help except those moments of insight, clarification and crystallisation which seem to come but seldom; and then, if we write, what we write will be as religious as we are at the stage of development at which we happen to be. For to my thinking, to be less or more "religious" (I do not mean simply to believe that one is less or more "religious," or to behave as if one was) is just to be less or more developed; which again does not mean that everybody when fully developed would be of the same stature; and which also accounts perhaps for my persistent feeling that Goethe always remained somewhat immature. I have a vexatious habit, whenever I begin to think about one subject, of wandering outside the boundaries which common sense indicates, and ending in some bottomless pit of metaphysics; and I am really only a good critic when I am held down to the task of analysing the particular poetry of a particular poet. But, as I have explained, I cannot treat the Bible as literature, or as poetry the parts of it which are regarded as poetry. And my other point was a very simple point, too: for it was merely that so long as the Bible is read as the Bible, so long will it exert an influence upon English poetry; and when it ceases to be read as the Bible, then I do not believe we need worry about poetry, for in those days I doubt whether anything will be written which would seem in the least like poetry, to us or to our forbears.[32]

NOTES

1. John Bunyan recounts in his *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners* (1666), how a chance encounter with several poor women in Bedfordshire redirected his life: "The Bible was precious to me in those days," he wrote, adding that he was never again away from it, "either by reading or meditation" (¶ 37). President Abraham Lincoln revealed to Senator John B. Henderson that he had attended a log-cabin school in Indiana, "where we had no reading books or grammars, and all our reading was done from the Bible. We stood in a long line and read in turn from it." See David Elton Trueblood, *Abraham Lincoln: Theologian of American Anguish* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973), 50.

2. Mary Baker Eddy (1821-1910), founder of the Christian Science religious movement in the Boston area, authored and periodically expanded her *Science and Health with Key to the Scriptures* (1875). In 1879, she founded the Church of Christ, Scientist, based on her interpretation of the Bible, primitive Christianity, and the lost science of spiritual healing. By the mid-1930s, there were 270,000 members in the United States.

3. The Ancient Library of Alexandria flourished as a center of scholarship from the third century BC; its destruction was ordered by Omar, a seventh-century Caliph of Baghdad, following the surrender of Alexandria in 642 AD.

4. Swinburne's "Aholibah" (1866) is based on an allegory in which Ezekiel compares the unfaithfulness of Israel to the behavior of two harlots: "These were their names: Samaria is Oholah, and Jerusalem, Oholibah" (23:4). Swinburne's "A Ballad of Burdens" (1866), the title of which TSE misremembers as "The Burden of Tyre," parodies the "burdens" announced by the prophet Isaiah, who uses "burden" to announce the inevitability of divine judgment on wickedness. His litany includes "The burden of Babylon" (13:1), the burdens of Moab (15:1), Damascus (17:1), Egypt (19:1), Dumah (21:11), Arabia (22:1), and concludes with "The burden of Tyre" (23:1), all of which are to be laid waste. Swinburne catalogs nine "burdens" illustrating the inevitability of decay that is "the end of everyman's desire." The first, "The burden of fair women," is that time, the "thief that has no heart," "finds fair cheeks and leaves them grey" (ll. 1, 4-5). In trying to recall the title of Swinburne's adaptation, TSE thinks of Tyre, the last in Isaiah's catalog of burdens.

5. Revelation 10:9-10: "And I went unto the angel, and said unto him, Give me the little book. And he said unto me, Take it, and eat it up; and it shall make thy belly bitter, but it shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey. And I took the little book . . . and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey: and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter."

6. In his "Note" to section II of "Dante" (1929), TSE states: "I deny . . . that the reader must share the beliefs of the poet to enjoy the poetry fully. . . . It is possible, and sometimes necessary, to argue that full understanding must identify itself with full belief. A good deal . . . hangs on the meaning, if any, of this short word *full*" (3.728).

7. In 1787, followers of Emanuel Swedenborg founded in England the New Church of the New Jerusalem, based on his visions and allegorical interpretations of the Bible. For TSE's views of Swedenborg's visions and his relation to Blake, see 2.189 and 3.241.

8. TSE concludes the "Note" to "Dante": "Actually, one probably has more pleasure in the poetry when one shares the beliefs of the poet. On the other hand, there is a distinct pleasure in enjoying poetry when one does *not* share the beliefs" (3.729-30).

9. In his Preface to *Dante* (1929), TSE expressed his indebtedness to George Santayana's *Three Philosophical Poets* (1910), on Lucretius, Dante, and Goethe. In comparing the philosophies and beliefs of the three in the essay, TSE wrote of Goethe: "Goethe always arouses in me a strong sentiment of disbelief in what he believes: Dante does not" (3.718).

10. In "The Prose of the Preacher" (1929), TSE remarked that Bishop Hugh Latimer "was adept in homely illustrations to drive a point home to an unlettered audience" (3.361).

11. Thomas Cranmer's first Book of Common Prayer (1549) underwent several revisions before the official version of 1662 appeared in the reign of Charles II. In 1911, Lord Halifax had opposed a revision and recommended reinstatement of the original, and again when parliament considered a new revision (known as "the Deposited Book") in 1927-28, which was approved by the House of Lords but defeated by the House of Commons on 15 Dec 1927. An amended version of the Deposited Book (The Prayer Book Measure 1928) was again defeated by the House of Commons on 14 June 1928. See TSE's *Criterion* "Commentary" (May 1927) on "The Prayer Book" (3.61) and his "Parliament and the New Prayer Book" (1928) (3.431).

12. Robert Burns, "The Cotter's Saturday Night" (1785): "The priest-like father reads the sacred page / How Abram was the friend of God on high . . . Perhaps the Christian volume is the theme / How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed" (ll. 118-19, 127-28).

13. In the Book of Common Prayer, the collects are short prayers in a terse five-part form, assigned for specific days in the liturgical calendar of the Church. Many were translated by Thomas Cranmer from the Latin prayers for each Sunday.

TSE wrote to Orlo Williams on 2 Dec 1929 to offer for review *A Farewell to Arms* (1929), Hemingway's third novel, which TSE characterized as "literature of barbarism" (*L4* 693). Williams began his review in the *Criterion* of July 1930 with a parody of Hemingway's style: "Hemingway makes plain statements. He makes his statements very plain . . . it was very clever of Hemingway to patent that staccato style, for it gives an effect of bluff originality which suits his material more often than not" (724-25).

14. The Coverdale Bible, translated by William Tyndale and Miles Coverdale (ca. 1488-1569), the first full translation of the Old and New Testaments into English, appeared shortly after Tyndale's death in 1536.

15. As a schoolboy at the Smith Academy (1902-05), TSE practiced Greek prose composition through the study of Xenophon and Homer.

16†. A parenthetical note in the hand of Rev. Perkins has been inserted in the space below this sentence: "(Here Eliot read the Greek of the following passage)"; Acts 7: 59-60: Stephens 1550 Textus Receptus.

17. Acts 7: 59-60; from the Douay-Rheims Bible, as printed in *The Missal: Compiled from the Missale Romanum*, with a preface by Adrian Fortescue (London: Burns and Oates, 1920), 78. Father Fortescue (1874-1923), was an English Roman Catholic theologian and liturgical scholar.

18. TSE evidently inserted by hand the Greek from the passage read before the King James translation.

19. *Liturgy and Worship: A Companion to the Prayer Books of the Anglican Communion*, ed. W. E. Lowther Clarke, (London: S. P. C. K., 1932). In his contribution, "Extempore Prayer" (763-73), Charles Harris (1865-1936), Prebendary of Hereford Cathedral, states that "when the formulae prescribed to accompany Unction and Imposition of Hands were extremely brief and vague . . . the Priest was almost certainly intended to supply the deficiencies by extempore prayer . . . It was certainly the usual custom for the Priest to allude in his prayer to almost every detail of the sick person's physical, spiritual, and mental condition, and to bless, exorcise and anoint almost the entire body, particularly the seat of the disease, or the place of greatest pain" (763-64).

20. Eric Milner-White (1884-1963), Anglican liturgical scholar, Dean and Fellow of King's College, Cambridge, from "Modern Prayers and their Writers" (749-62; here 751). *The Private Devotions of Dr. William Laud, Archbishop of Canterbury*, first appeared in 1838; *A Collection of Private Devotions for the Hours of Prayer* (1627), by John Cosin (1595-1672), Bishop of Durham and friend of Laud, was criticized by Puritans for the "Romish" overtones of the devotions.

21. "But above these," writes Milner-White, "towers the greatest book of private devotions that Christian and Catholic has begotten, the *Preces Privatae* of Lancelot Andrewes. . . . The Church of England has been slow to recognise consciously its supreme devotional classic" (751-52). For TSE's discussion of *The Preces Privatae*, see "Lancelot Andrewes" (2.820). The *Private Prayers* of Rev. E. B. Pusey (1800-82) were composed ca. 1853-55 for one of his spiritual advisees and published posthumously in 1884.

22. 2 Kings 5:10

23. Leviticus 11:9-10: "These shall ye eat of all that are in the waters: whatsoever hath fins and scales in the waters, in the seas, and in the rivers, them shall ye eat. And all that have not fins and scales in the seas, and in the rivers, of all that move in the waters, and of any living thing which is in the waters, they shall be an abomination to you."

24. James's *The Golden Bowl* (1904) takes its title from Ecclesiastes 12:6, "or the golden bowl be broken" (quoted in the text below).

25. Ecclesiastes 12:5-7, 13; TSE drew upon this passage in *Ash-Wednesday* II ("And the bones sang chirping / With the burden of the grasshopper" (*CPP* 91) and for an early working title of *Murder in the Cathedral*: "Fear in the Way."

26. Interchangeable titles: The Song of Solomon 1:1: "The song of songs, which is Solomon's."

27. Charles Gore (1853-1932), Bishop of Oxford, chief editor and contributor to the two-volume *A New Commentary on Holy Scripture: Including the Apocrypha* (London: S. P. C. K.,

1928; rev. 1929); TSE quotes from "*Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher*" by Sidney Newman Sedgwick (1872-1941), in vol 1, part 1 (400-10; here 402).

On 16 Oct 1930, while considering Ernest Rhys's invitation to write the introduction for the Everyman Library publication of Pascal's *Pensées*, TSE recommended Gore as one "who could do the job much better than I" (*L5* 531).

28. Ecclesiastes 12:2-3, 13

29. Isaiah 6:1-7. TSE marked in his Bible (King's) God's call to Isaiah: "Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine" (Isaiah 43:1).

30. Psalm 130:1-6; translation as printed in the 1928 Book of Common Prayer

31. TSE discusses the distinction between "religious" and "devotional" verse in "The Devotional Poets of the Seventeenth Century: Donne, Herbert, Crashaw" (1930) (4.74).

32. TSE gave a version of this lecture on 23 Mar 1933 at Princeton University, as reported in *The Daily Princetonian*, "T. S. Eliot Reviews Influence of Bible / Full Value of Work Lost on Those Who Do Not Believe in It, Declares Poet-Critic" (24 Mar 1933, 1). TSE refers to John Livingston Lowe's essay on the King James Bible, "The Noblest Monument of English Prose" (1930):

The influence of the Bible upon English literature has been an influence only upon men who have read it as the Bible and have believed in it, T. S. Eliot . . . said in his Princeton lecture last night.

Taking the fourth verse of the fifth chapter of the Book of Revelation, "And I wept much because no man was found worthy to open and to read the book, neither to look thereon," as his "text" for the evening. Mr. Eliot disagreed with Professor Lowes' description of the Bible as "the noblest monument of English prose," saying that a monument is rarely influential and concerns itself chiefly with things dead.

Mr. Eliot has much faith in the influence of the Bible on English prose when it is read as the Bible. In that capacity the literary influence of the English version has had more effect than any other nation's translation on its literature. The person who is not a Christian, therefore, is unable to derive full appreciation from the Bible. The poet who uses the Bible merely as literature betrays himself as immature and has gained for himself Mr. Eliot's distrust.

"The Bible will not have the slightest influence on English prose or verse unless men believe that it teaches the way," he said. When the Old and New Testaments cease to be read as the Bible, Mr. Eliot will fear for the sort of poetry that will be written. All poetry should be in a sense religious, he feels. A poet should exhibit a finer sensibility which can contemplate something of Heaven and hell as well as of earth.

TEXTUAL NOTE

1. Houghton: bMS Am 1691 (26); untitled; archivally titled [The Bible as scripture and as literature]; archival provenance: "(Kindness of Rev. John Carroll Perkins)"; TS (carbon), 17 pp., numbered 2-17; no date; holograph insertion by Perkins in black ink at top of first page: "T. S. Eliot / (an uncorrected copy) / Read by T. S. Eliot / before the Women's Alliance King's Chapel / Dec. 1, 1932."

THE PERCY GRAEME TURNBULL MEMORIAL LECTURES

THE VARIETIES OF METAPHYSICAL POETRY

THREE LECTURES DELIVERED AT
THE JOHNS HOPKINS UNIVERSITY
BALTIMORE, USA IN JANUARY 1933

T. S. ELIOT

Lecture I: Toward a Definition of Metaphysical Poetry

Lecture II: The Conceit in Donne and Crashaw

Lecture III: Laforgue and Corbière in our Time

Textual Note

Lecture I

Toward a Definition of Metaphysical Poetry[1]

It is not my intention, in three lectures, to cover the whole ground of what is ordinarily called "metaphysical poetry." Out of the group of poets commonly included under that term in extension, I shall only refer to the principal members. On the other hand, I shall have something to say about other poets, both more ancient and much more modern, who seem to me to have some relation to the subject; and in this way to support a tentative definition of metaphysical poetry. The purpose of these lectures is indeed to arrive somewhere near a definition. For there is an obvious difficulty about the term as we use it, most conveniently, to designate a number of poets more or less contemporary, or belonging to two generations which overlap, we will say from Donne to Cowley, in the seventeenth century. So long as we use the term "metaphysical poetry" merely as standing for the work of these poets, we get along well enough. But we cannot be content with that, and we try to discover what this "metaphysicality" is that they have in common. But the moment we define "metaphysicality" in any way at all satisfactory, we find that not all of these poets appear to share it, and that what they all have in common is something else, something local in time and place. What we have to do, in the end, is to *impose* a meaning, rather than to *discover* it.

We have on the one hand an idea, or a term which appears to stand for an idea; and on the other, a considerable mass of literature which appears to embody this idea. Nothing, at first sight, more easy. We have only to evolve from our own minds a definition of what metaphysical poetry ought to be, then apply it, separate the metaphysical authors from the non-metaphysical, and if we incline to be more analytical, the metaphysical from the non-metaphysical part of the former authors' writings. But consider the idea and the concrete product more closely. This term "metaphysical," used by Dryden and adopted by Johnson, was first used as a convenient term *pointing to* a certain number of poets; it was as much defined *by* its material, as defining it.[2] It was first used by persons who were not themselves metaphysicians, or of a very philosophical cast of mind, and they certainly did not employ the term with any thought of Lucretius or Dante in their heads. The more metaphysical branches of philosophy were neither much practised, nor in very high repute in England, either in the age of Dryden or in the age of Johnson. There is room also for asking whether the term may not somewhat have altered in meaning between the time of Dryden and that of Johnson. We have even to ask whether the term can remain in use, justifiably, for the poets to whom it was first applied. We must remember that we have been using it not only for a larger number of poets than that which Dryden and Johnson had in mind, but for these poets seen in a different order of merit. There is no evidence that Johnson had in mind, or would have included, many poets who seem to us to belong to this category: Crashaw, Marvell, King, the two Herberts, Vaughan, Benlowes and of course Traherne who was not known, pass unmentioned. Johnson speaks of Donne and Ben Jonson as setting the fashion (he makes a vague reference to Marino) and enumerates as their "immediate successors" who still wore some shreds of honour in his own time, Suckling, Waller, Denham, Cowley, Cleveland and Milton. Waller, Denham and Milton he presents only to withdraw instantly; Suckling he dismisses as negligible; there remain only Cowley and Cleveland, and these two, with Donne, are the poets from whose work he draws all the illustrations in his famous essay.[3] And remember that he attaches a higher value to the work of Cowley than to that of Donne. Dryden, in his "Preface to *Sylvae*," refers to Cowley with what seems to us unmeasured praise; and in his references to Donne, appears more impressed by the *Satires*, than by any other portion of that poet's work.[4]

It will be seen, accordingly, that there is something very accidental about the invention and use of the term "metaphysical poetry." To this race of authors, Dryden and Johnson, neither perhaps fully qualified to judge, conceded profundity of thought and learning; and thought and learning, dressed in outlandish and difficult imagery, seemed to Johnson "metaphysical." His description is perfectly just, and his criticism legitimate and felicitous, when measured by the sort of passage that he quotes; but on the whole his use of the term "metaphysical" is rather libellous of metaphysics, than illuminating of his authors. And the qualities of profundity of thought and learning which Johnson respected in them, must be called into question and analysed: the profundity of their thought, and the use which they made of their learning.

At this point we might be tempted to make a fresh start. Let us begin, we might say, with those poets whom the whole world will admit to be concerned with metaphysics, and measure the metaphysicality of Donne and his school by them. If Donne and his school turn out not to be metaphysical at all, then we will find a new name for them. If we begin by assuming that "metaphysical" ought to mean something akin to "philosophical," then we must go to the poets – Lucretius, Dante and Goethe – discussed by Mr. Santayana in his brilliant and admirable little book *Three Philosophical Poets*. It is clear that for Mr. Santayana a philosophical poet is one with a scheme of the universe, who embodies that scheme in verse, and essays to realise his conception of man's place and part in the universe. Whether the philosophical system is one which he takes over from a philosopher, or whether it is one which he evolves himself in the process of writing his poetry, is not here important. I think that on the whole I accept Mr. Santayana's definition of "philosophical poetry." I think that neither Mr. Santayana nor I mean by philosophical poetry that poetry which may be given the sort of interpretation which finds "occult" meaning – the term occult including a wide range of types from the *Sortes Virgilianae* to certain interpretations of Shakespeare and Blake.[5] We have both, I imagine, a prejudice in favour of the clear and distinct; we mean a philosophy which is expressed, not one which is ineffable. And I should agree with Mr. Santayana that Shakespeare is not a philosophical poet; and should say that Coleridge, when he said he was, simply used the wrong adjective, even though I am not sure what the right one is.[6] And I would add one qualification. Under philosophical poetry we must, a priori, include Lucretius and Dante, poets whom we take to be poets and to be philosophical by immediate inspection and common consent. And we must not include all great poetry, for the adjective would become meaningless. And we must proceed from the side of poetry, not from that of philosophy. That is to say, we must restrict the inclusion to poetical work of the first intensity, in which the thought is so to speak fused into poetry at a very high temperature. Consequently we must leave out of account those works, even when very fine, such as Pope's "Essay on Man," in which the fusion is less perfect, or made at a lower temperature, and some works of Blake in which we are not sure that it takes place at all.

Now I am convinced that of "philosophy" in this legitimate sense, in the sense in which we can speak of Lucretius, Dante and Goethe as philosophical (though not so surely as "philosophers"), Donne and the poets whom we associate with him possessed not an atom. So far, we find no justification for using the term "metaphysical." Some years ago I had a correspondence with Mr. Saintsbury, both in *The Times* and privately, on this very point.[7] Mr. Saintsbury wished not only to keep the term – and in this we are in accord – but to give it, by what hardly seemed to me better than a *jeu de mots*, a further and more exact significance based on its etymology. Metaphysics was, of course, originally only that work of Aristotle's which came after his *Physics*. But the metaphysical, for Mr. Saintsbury, is that which comes after the natural; the metaphysical poets are those who seek something beyond or after nature, refinements of thought or emotion: ergo, they are metaphysical. Mr. Saintsbury's definition of metaphysical poets as those who have and are chiefly interested in "second thoughts," as he phrases it, is ingenious and worth considering. But it seems to me to have the usual inconvenience of applying to other poetry which we should not call metaphysical, and not applying to all the poetry which we call metaphysical, and still worse, of applying rather better to the second-rate than to the best. And when Mr. Saintsbury chose to support his definition by claiming Swinburne as a metaphysical poet, the structure, so far as I was concerned, collapsed.

So I shall assert roundly that while metaphysical poetry has indeed something to do with philosophy, the connexion is not found through the term metaphysical. Its claim to the term comes only through one of the secondary, even whimsical meanings of "metaphysical," one of which is "oversubtle." I do not think that any of us would be satisfied by meaning "oversubtle poetry" when we speak of "metaphysical poetry." Subtle it usually is – but so is much other good poetry – and oversubtle we will not allow the best of it to be. I think, however, that by its long association with the excellent society of Donne and others, the adjective is now entitled to a tertiary meaning, and that we proceed to discover or invent. I now proceed still more boldly to declare that I find something in common between Donne and two other groups of poets: Dante in his earlier poetry (as in the *Vita Nuova*) and his circle, and a few poets in the seventies and eighties of the last century, in France, particularly Jules Laforgue. My endeavour will be to persuade you that you find it too.

The Italian poetry of the time of Dante has a very significant background of ideas. Remy de Gourmont is not an authority whom one would often quote in matters of scholarship, but in his interesting, if not wholly satisfactory little book entitled *Dante, Béatrice et la poésie amoureuse*, he makes succinctly the distinction between Provençal and early Italian poetry. Speaking of Provençal society, he says:

> Pour aimer, il fallait être marié et aimer en dehors du mariage. Pas plus qu'entre époux, entre jeunes gens libres l'amour n'était admis. Afin d'avoir

> droit aux hommages des chevaliers, il faut que la jeune fille se marie. Ce que nous laissent constamment entrevoir les poètes provençaux, c'est une dame noble, belle, puissante, entourée d'une cour de jeunes chevaliers, parmi lesquels il lui était permis, sinon dûment ordonné, d'en distinguer un et [de] se l'attacher. Le lien formé, ils [se] devaient mutuellement amour sous peine de déchéance; rien ne pouvait les séparer que, momentanément, la mort. C'était la fidélité dans l'adultère. . . . La dame provençale n'est nullement "angélisée." On ne la craint pas, on la désire.

He then draws the contrast between this system and the spirit of the Italian poets.

> La nouvelle école florentine . . . devait modifier profondément ıa conception de l'amour, et par conséquent les moeurs. L'amour des poètes devient pur, presque impersonnel; son objet n'est plus une femme, mais la beauté, la féminité personifée dans une créature idéale. Aucune idée de mariage ni de possession [ne] les hante. . . . L'amour a tous les caractères d'un culte, dont le sonnet [et] la canzone sont les hymnes. [. . .] C'est une date dans l'histoire de l'évolution des sentiments humains; c'est un pas vers la vérite et un progrès social immense.[8]

More recent, and more scholarly writers – such as Señor Asin and Mr. Christopher Dawson – lead us to believe that this Dantesque conception of love is due, ultimately, to Arabic influences;[9] but I am not here concerned with its origins. My point is merely that in the poetry of Dante and his group we do find a philosophical passion – not a passion for philosophy but an alteration of human passion by philosophy. To us, as we first approach these poets, these may seem to be extremely abstract and ratified passions; but they are no more abstract than Crashaw's feeling towards the Magdalen.[10] It is true that contemplation, rather than enjoyment, is the state aimed at; but contemplation is probably the most ecstatic emotional state possible. When Cavalcanti says

> Chi è questa che vien, ch'ogni uom la mira,
> Chi fa tremar de claritate l'aere?

(or, chi fa di clarità l'aer tremare): "who makes the air all tremulous with light" in Rossetti's translation,[11] this is not a rhetorical and flattering flower of speech, but an exact statement of a visual impression produced by the beloved upon the lover for which I dare say some physiological account could be given. The *Vita Nuova* is no more a dry and lifeless allegory than it is a literal history; but of this I have already written what I have to say.[12]

Whether an Arabic influence was at work or not, there was certainly a background of mediaeval philosophy: the delight in ideas, the dialectical subtlety, the intensity with which ideas were felt, the clarity and precision of the expression, have this background. And one influence was surely the mysticism of the twelfth century. It is the antithesis of Bergsonism. Its origin is in Aristotle's *Metaphysics* 1072b and elsewhere, and in the *Nichomachaean Ethics*.[13] For the twelfth century, the divine vision could only be attained by a process in which the intellect took part; it was through and beyond discursive thought that man could arrive at beatitude. It is different from the way of approach of the Spanish mystics, and from that of the German mystics. It may be called the Scottish mysticism, since the Victorines, its ablest exponents Richard and Hugh of St. Victor, came from that country, and exhibit the analytical and dialectical abilities for which their race is renowned. This is the Riccardo of the *Paradiso*, Canto X:

> Che a considerar fu più che viro
> "Who in contemplation was more than man."[14]

His treatise *De Gratia Contemplationis*, called the *Benjamin Minor*, is concerned with the operations and stages of the mind in its progress towards the divine vision.[15] It shows some resemblance to the classifications of some Indian mystical treatises. It is wholly impersonal, like a handbook of hygiene, and contains no autobiographical element whatever; and nothing emotional or sensational. Here he is distinguishing between the three stages of mental progress: cogitation, meditation and contemplation, the three stages of the mind's pilgrimage.

> Cogitatio per devia quaeque lento pede, sine respectu perventionis, passim huc illucque vagatur. Meditatio per ardua saepe et aspera ad directionis finem cum magna animi industria nititur. Contemplatio libero volatu quocunque eam fert impetus mira agilitate circumfertur.[16]

He develops the distinction, with great anxiety not to be misunderstood, in several ways.

> Cogitatio est sine labore et fructu. In meditatione est labor cum fructu. Contemplatio permanet sine labore cum fructu. In cogitatione evagatio, in meditatione investigatio, in contemplatio admiratio. Ex imaginatione

> cogitatio. Ex ratione meditatio, ex intelligentia contemplatio. . . . Intelligentia obtinet supremum locum, imaginatio infimum, ratio medium.[17]

(Incidentally, one may commend a comparison of this use of "imagination" with that of Coleridge).[18] The method seems to me to be essentially the same as that of Aquinas. Cf. Aquinas: "It results evidently that it is only in the divine vision that intelligent beings can find the true felicity."[19]

Now in all of the three periods with which I am concerned – Florence in the thirteenth century, London in the seventeenth century, Paris in the nineteenth century, and in the poets of these periods whom I have most in mind, there is a background of philosophy and mysticism. Dante, as you will have become aware, I class both as a philosophical and as a "metaphysical" poet: we are occupied here with his metaphysicality, not with his philosophicality, though both are essential to the *Divine Comedy*. Among them all, ideas are felt, and feelings are transformed by ideas. Behind Dante and his friends, there is the mysticism of Richard and Hugh of St. Victor. Behind Donne and his period, is that of St. Ignatius and that of St. Theresa. Behind Jules Laforgue, is the mysticism of Hartmann and Schopenhauer. You will observe that not all these mysticisms are of the same quality. You will have to observe further that in these three periods we get a difference in kind and degree of penetration of the sensibility by the mystical philosophy. Nevertheless, I hope to establish some relationship. A strong bent towards theological and philosophical study, and no direction towards creative activity in these studies, is discernible in the three poets whom I have mentioned.

As a good deal has been written about Donne's mediaevalism, I am obliged in passing to try to dissipate that myth. The thesis has been most forcibly put by Miss Mary Ramsay in her valuable book *Les idées médiaévales chez Donne*.[20] Miss Ramsay maintains not only that Donne possessed a "very complete" philosophical system and a profound mysticism, but that his conception of the universe, and his philosophical technique, are essentially mediaeval. If this is true, it must follow that Donne is both a mediavel and a philosophical poet; not only a metaphysical.

There is no doubt of Donne's natural turn of mind towards theology and the law: his extensive knowledge of law indeed suggests to us that there was an inclination to the more public and disputatious, rather than the more private and speculative, aspect of philosophy; as indeed was characteristic of his time. When we inspect the dreary index of his reading most usefully provided by Miss Ramsay, we recoil;[21] no man of Donne's ability and attainments ever seems to have read a greater quantity of solid rubbish. But we remark at once, how a large part of his reading was in authors contemporary with himself, or nearly so. True, he was familiar with the fathers of the Church, as any thorough student had to be, and with the most important of the mediavel philosophers; but so was Hooker, as Miss Ramsay acknowledges, yet she does not go so far as to say that Hooker's conception of the universe was mediaeval.[22] Donne must have read Aquinas with care; he quotes Bonaventura, and of course Augustine influenced him. But he was equally at home among later theologians, both Roman and Protestant. Walton tells us that when Donne, at the age of nineteen, began to apply himself to the study of theology, he plunged into the work of Bellarmine – for the purpose of resolving his hesitation between the Roman and the Reformed Church – so thoroughly that a year later he was able to show the Dean of Gloucester all of Bellarmine's works annotated by his own hand.[23] Now Cardinal Bellarmine was a man some thirty years older than Donne, and still living when Donne studied his works. Donne made himself in time equally acquainted with the work of all his distinguished theological contemporaries, and also of a great many whose distinction has long since vanished. He knew the works of Luther, of Calvin, of Melanchthon, of Peter Martyr, among Protestant writers; of Cajetan, Valdez and Fra Victoria among the more philosophical of Roman commentators; he had the controversial literature of the Jesuits at the ends of his fingers; finally, he was acquainted with many of those writers of the Renaissance whose orthodoxy, from either a Roman or a Protestant standpoint, is doubtful, such as Nicholas of Cusa and the host of writers who exploited the Kabbalah, the hermetic writings and other compilations of the sort.[24] It is not irrelevant to remind ourselves that Donne's great grandmother was a sister of Sir Thomas More; and More wrote a biography of Pico della Mirandola, which was much admired by Donne. More admired Pico, and was also influenced by Colet, who translated that recension of neo-Platonic philosophy attributed to Dionysius the Areopagite. Donne's great grandfather, More's brother-in-law, was active in theological controversy, which led to his conversion to Protestantism. Donne's grandfather was John Heywood, the author of the Interludes; his uncle, whom he must have known, even though perhaps slightly, was the Jasper Heywood who made the first translation of three of Seneca's plays, and who subsequently became a Jesuit.[25] This is a remarkable family; and certainly one that kept up with the times; and the influences breathed on Donne's cradle do not seem to have been very mediaeval.

What Donne's reading does show is a pronounced taste, even a passion, for theology of the more controversial and legalistic type; for theology, in fact, as it was practised in his time; and I think that King James was perfectly right when he brought pressure upon Donne to make him take orders. His reading, and his tastes, were no more mediaeval than those of any other theologian or preacher of his time. What Miss Ramsay does however make abundantly clear is the partiality, as well as the immensity, of his reading. He had no doubt been instructed in the Latin classics, if not in the Greek, by his tutors, but he makes little use of them. One allusion makes us believe that he read the *Divine Comedy*, or had the opportunity of so doing.[26] That there is no evidence of his appreciating his contemporary poets and dramatists, I count not against him; there is much to be said for a poet's not reading his contemporaries. And Donne was primarily a theologian; a poet, only [by] avocation. But the poet in a man does tend to spoil everything else; Donne could not have been a theologian of the type of Richard Hooker, or even of the type of Jeremy Taylor: his genius, his combination of gifts, is exhibited most fully in his magnificent sermons.[27] We must remember this in order to see him where he was, a little apart from his contemporary men of letters, even when he mixed among them. The speciality of his interests protected him from three great influences of his age: those of Montaigne, Machiavelli and Seneca the poet. Donne is more Jacobean than Elizabethan; the century which was to be predominantly a century of ecclesiastical and theological politics was announced by the ascent of a Scottish theologian to the English throne, and this theologian made John Donne his private chaplain.[28]

The intellectual background of Donne, as I have tried to show, was thus very different from the intellectual background of Dante and his friends. There was a great deal of Jesuitism in it; and I do not think that anyone who has ever examined the origins and constitution of that remarkable order can fail to notice its great difference from any of the orders founded in the Middle Ages, or any of the more modern orders founded on their model. The founder of the Society of Jesus, that extraordinary man St. Ignatius Loyola, seems to have been a reader of romances, before his vocation, an admirer of Amadis of Gaul, a sort of Don Quixote.[29] It has even been affirmed that in the formation of his order he adopted, in some particulars of practical organisation, Moslem rather than Christian models.[30]

Much of what I have been saying may seem to you to be very remote from my nominal subject. But in considering the three poets with whom I am chiefly concerned as "metaphysical," the philosophical background is very important; not so much for our purposes its abstract scheme, but its feeling [and] tone. As for the mediaeval philosophy behind Dante, we are now, I think, thanks to the devoted labours of Professor Étienne Gilson, and to his gifts of exposition and style, beginning to take a more enlightened view.[31] There was a time when we thought of the mediaeval philosophers as playing a futile game with a great many strict rules. They were not, we supposed, allowed to question the truth of dogma, and therefore their pursuit of truth was hopeless from the start; their thought was crushed by authority; and so they spent their time in dividing hairs and determining the specific gravity of angels – much as a man condemned to wait an hour in a country railway station with nothing to read might pass the time in casting up the figures on the timetable. We now look at them differently. Unlike modern philosophers, they held certain beliefs in common; they all wrote in the same language; it was therefore not impossible for them to some extent to understand each other – an attainment extremely difficult in our modern philosophy. Then, the Church could and did afford them great liberty of speculation; for the Church was one; when the Albigensian heresy was done away with, the Church was not occupied with defence or polemic.[32] The speculations of the philosophers were not dangerous; and they were men interested in the discovery of the truth who had no need to consider practical consequences.

Compare the situation of the thirteenth-century theologian, in the freedom of his university, unhampered, unhurried, unconcerned with wars and dynasties, with that of the theologian of either the Roman or the Reformed Churches at the time of the Counter-Reformation. The Society of Jesus was formed for the purpose of combating heresy; it was, in its first period, military, rather than meditative or charitable, in its purpose. And admirably did it do its work. It produced accomplished men of letters, erudite and subtle commentators; it was served perhaps by better brains, and certainly by a better organisation, than was Protestantism; it counted among its forces innumerable pious and devoted men; but it produced no great development in philosophic and theological thought. Neither, for that matter, did the Protestant Churches in the seventeenth century. There was no time. Politics cannot wait. One of the many disastrous effects of the Reformation was the theological war, the sectarian diplomacy, which reduced the Word of God to a business of armies, fleets and chancelleries. Theology which is bent to political agitation, orthodoxy and heterodoxy at bay, extinguishes the light of pure ideas, the Greek disinterestedness of mind, which the Middle Ages had revived: but it does not extinguish religious sentiment. On the contrary, the religious feeling of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries burns with a fierce human heat which is itself alarming, as a rapid combustion in acceleration of nature. Human curiosity too, deflected from one direction, turns to another. Religion and theology, abandoning the pursuit of metaphysical truth, develop in the seventeenth century in the direction of psychology; an alteration which Mr. Mario Praz has well noted.[33]

It would seem as if now and then in history the human mind altered its categories of truth, ceased to be able to think in one way, and began a course of thinking in another. There is perhaps nothing mysterious about that. Often, it has been remarked, the state of mind appropriate to the development of a new science comes into existence before the science itself. Diderot in this way anticipated Darwin; the fancies of Leonardo were brilliant anticipations. Certainly Donne, when we compare him to genuinely mediaeval poets, is in a sense a psychologist. And you will find this element too in his sermons, compared to earlier sermons. I am not qualified to expose in detail how the change came about. It seems to me that the fine distinctions, the discussions of conduct and casuistry in which some orthodox theologians indulged, tend in the direction of a self-consciousness which had not been in the world before. It is clearly formulated, later, by Descartes, when he affirmed that what we know is not the world of objects, but our own ideas of those objects. The revolution is immense. Instead of ideas as meanings, as references to an outside world, you have suddenly a new world coming into existence inside our own mind and therefore, as we crudely fancy it, inside our own head. "Je conçois, dis-je," says Descartes,

> aisemént que l'imagination se peut faire de cette sorte, s'il est vrai qu'il y ait des corps; et parce que je ne puis recontrer aucune autre voie pour expliquer comment elle se fait, je conjecture de là probablement qu'il y en a; mais ce n'est que probablement; et quoique j'examine soigneusement toutes choses, je ne trouve pas néanmoins que, de cette idée distincte de la nature corporelle que j'ai en mon imagination, je puisse tirer

> aucun argument qui conclue avec nécessité l'existence de quelque corps.[34]

Donne of course is not consciously of this way of thinking, or indeed of any way of thinking. He was not too nice about coherence: a notion of Maimonides or Averroes could exist in the mind of Donne alongside of the same notion in the form which St. Thomas had given it, or he will entertain a notion of the pseudo-Dionysius which St. Thomas would repudiate.[35] But his tendency is all in the new direction. In his poetry we often perceive his attention to be on the idea in his mind, rather than upon the object to which the idea refers. To contemplate an idea, because it is my idea, to observe its emotional infusion, to play with it, instead of using it as a simple meaning, may bring curious and beautiful things to light, though it lend itself, this petting and teasing of one's mental offspring, to extremities of torturing of language. It is not – as in the more bombastic Elizabethans – so much the vocabulary that is tortured, as it is the idea.

> I wonder by my troth, what thou and I
> Did, till we loved? Were we not wean'd till then?
> But sucked on country pleasures, childishly?
> Or snorted we in the seven sleepers' den?
> 'Twas so: but this, all pleasures fancies be.
> If ever any beauty I did see,
> Which I desir'd, and got, 'twas but a dream of thee.[36]

This is only one example, in Donne's lighter, though not frivolous mood, of what I have called teasing the idea. I shall pursue this subject in my next lecture.

NOTES

1. TSE synthesized his three Percy Graeme Turnbull Memorial Lectures from the typescript of his Clark Lectures (1926), which he brought to America with him, reducing and revising those eight lectures for a more limited focus on the nature of metaphysical poetry in the thirteenth, seventeenth, and nineteenth centuries. In this first Turnbull lecture, delivered on 30 Jan in Latrobe Hall to an audience of more than 400, he drew upon parts of Clark Lectures I, II, and III, adding new examples and contexts. TSE's quotations and references, many of which appear earlier in the Clark Lectures in volume 2, are identified briefly or in full here; the reader is referred to previous references and citations in the corresponding pages and note numbers in volume 2. See textual notes (4.757).

2. In "A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" (1693), Dryden wrote that Donne "affects the metaphysics, not only in his satires, but in his amorous verses, where

nature only should reign." Johnson established the common usage in his "Life of Cowley" (1779): "About the beginning of the seventeenth century appeared a race of writers that may be termed the metaphysical poets"; see 2.624, n.8.

3. Johnson, in his "Life of Cowley" (*Lives* 10); see 2.624, n.10.

4. In his "Preface to *Sylvae*" (1685), Dryden acknowledges Cowley as a great authority on wit; in "A Discourse concerning the Original and Progress of Satire" he states "that if we are not so great wits as Donne, yet certainly we are better poets"; see 2.612.

5. See 2.614, n.15

6. Santayana, in his chapter on "The Absence of Religion in Shakespeare" in *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1900), stated that "Shakespeare . . . is remarkable among the greater poets for being without a philosophy and without a religion" (168). TSE himself argued that Shakespeare is not a philosophical poet in "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca" (3.252), an argument that he confirmed in his Norton Lecture on "Shelley and Keats": "Some years ago I tried to make the point . . . that Dante possessed a "philosophy" in a sense in which Shakespeare held none . . . Dante and Lucretius expounded explicit philosophies, as Shakespeare did not" (4.648). In Coleridge's *Lectures and Notes on Shakspere* (London: G. Bell & Sons, 1908), to which TSE refers in the last of his Norton Lectures as a representative moment in the history of Shakespeare criticism, Coleridge refers to Shakespeare on several occasions in noun form as "a great philosopher" (487); however, TSE may have had in mind Coleridge's attempt to link his recurring views of Shakespeare as both philosopher and aristocrat: "He is always the philosopher and the moralist . . . If he must have any name, he should be styled a philosophical aristocrat" (281).

7. See TSE's letter of 3 Nov 1921 to the editor of the *TLS*, "The Metaphysical Poets" (2.386).

8. Remy de Gourmont, *Dante, Béatrice et la poésie amoureuse. Essai sur l'idéal feminine en Italie à la fin du XIII siècle* [*Dante, Beatrice, and Love Poetry: An Essay on the Feminine Ideal at the End of the Thirteenth Century*] (Paris: Mercure de France, 1908). *Trans*: In order to love, one had to be married and love outside marriage. No more than between husband and wife, love between free young people was not permitted. In order to have the right to receive homage from knights, the young woman had to get married. What the Provençal poets constantly help us to catch a glimpse of is a noble lady, beautiful, powerful, surrounded by a court of young knights, among whom she was permitted, if not duly commanded, to select one and to attach herself to him. The link established, they owed each other love under pain of forfeiture [of lover's rights]; nothing could separate them except, temporarily, death. It was fidelity within adultery. . . . The Provençal lady is in no way "angelic." One does not fear her, one desires her. (29-30)

The new Florentine school . . . would profoundly modify this conception of love, and consequently, the mores. The poets' love becomes pure, almost impersonal; its object is no longer a woman but beauty, femininity personified in an ideal creature. No idea of marriage or of possession haunts them . . . Love has all the characteristics of a cult, of which the sonnet and canzone are the hymns. [. . .] It is a time in the history of the evolution of human feelings; it is a step towards the truth and an immense social progress. (31-32)

9. In *Islam and the Divine Comedy* (1919; Eng. trans. 1926), Miguel Asín Palacious (1871-1944), a Catholic priest and Professor of Arabic at the University of Madrid, delineated the general influence of Islamic thought on Dante's work and drew specific parallels between Dante's vision of love in the *Vita Nuova* and similar visions described by Ibn Arabi of the

Spanish school of Arabic writers. In his influential article on "The Origins of the Romantic Tradition," which had appeared in the *Criterion* of Jan 1932 (222-48), Christopher Dawson argued that "the new school of Tuscan poetry which arose in the second half of the thirteenth century, was equally indebted to the Provençal tradition and owes its peculiar character to its fusion of the art of the troubadours with the thought of Arabic philosophy. The poetry of Guido Cavalcanti and the other poets of the *dolce stil nuovo*, above all the youthful Dante, attains a deeper and more spiritual beauty than anything in the literature of northern chivalry or in that of Provence itself" (245).

10. "Sainte Mary Magdalene or The Weeper" (1646); see 2.710-12.

11. *Trans*: "Who is she coming, whom all gaze upon, / Who makes the air all tremulous with light"; trans. Rossetti, "A Rapture concerning his Lady," *The Early Italian Poets* (London: George Newnes, 1904), 255. TSE quotes from Cavalcanti's "Sonetto VII," giving variants of the second line but slightly misquoting in parentheses the alternative that Pound preferred, "che fa di clarità l'aer tremare!" *The Sonnets and Ballate of Guido Cavalcanti*, trans. Ezra Pound (Boston : Small, Maynard, 1912), 14; see 2.655, n.25.

12. In Part III of "Dante" (1929), TSE turns from the *Divine Comedy* to the *Vita Nuova* in order to "amplify what I have suggested about the mediaeval mind expressed in allegory" (3.727). Recognizing that there are grounds for arguing that the work is entirely allegorical, "for asserting, that is, that Beatrice is merely a personification of an abstract virtue, intellectual or moral," he goes on to argue that it is "a mixture of biography and allegory," that it "can only be understood by accustoming ourselves to finding meaning in *final causes* rather than in origins," and that it is "a very sound psychological treatise on something related to what is now called 'sublimation'" (3.727) (3.730-31, 733).

13. In 1072 of the *Metaphysics*, Aristotle discusses the final cause and end of movement in the universe: "The final cause, then, produces motion by being loved, and by that which it moves, it moves all other things." See 2.651, n.9.

14. Richard appears in the *Paradiso* X (130-32) with Isidore of Seville and the Venerable Bede: "Vedi oltre flammeggiar l'ardente spiro / d'Isidoro, di Beda e di Riccardo / che a considerer fu più che viro"; *trans*: "See flaming next the glowing breath of Isidore, of Bede, and of Richard, who, in contemplating, was more than man" (*DC3* 124-25).

15. Richard's *De gratia contemplationis* [*On the Grace of Contemplation*] was known by ancient scholars as the *Benjamin Major*, as Migne indicates, and in modern times as *The Mystical Ark*. TSE confuses this work with Richard's *De praeparatione animi ad contemplationem* [*Of the Preparation of the Soul for Contemplation*], called the *Benjamin Minor*, more recently *The Twelve Patriarchs*; both were composed ca. 1153-1162; see 2.652, n.14.

16. *Trans*: "By means of inconstant and slow feet, thinking wanders here and there in all directions without any regard for arriving. Meditation presses forward with great activity of soul, often through arduous and tough places, to the end of the way it is going. Contemplation, in free flight, circles around with marvelous quickness wherever impulse moves it."

17. TSE's emphasis. *Trans*: "Thinking is without labor and fruit; in meditation there is labor with fruit; contemplation continues without labor but with fruit. In thinking there is wandering; in meditation, investigation; in contemplation, wonder . . . Understanding occupies the highest place; imagination, the lowest; reason, the middle." Trans. Grover A. Zinn, *The Twelve Patriarchs; The Mystical Ark; Book Three of the Trinity* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979), 155-56.

TSE quotes from Migne's edition (vol 196) of *De gratia contemplationis*, Book I, chapter III, columns 66-67.

18. Whereas Richard associates imagination with thinking and places it third in order of mental power to contemplation and meditation, Coleridge, in Chapter XIII of *Biographia Literaria*, holds the "primary IMAGINATION" to be "the living power and prime agent of all human perception, and as a repetition in the finite mind of the eternal act of creation in the infinite I AM." TSE's parenthetical invitation to comparison was likely prompted by the fact that on 9 Dec 1932 he had focused in his fourth Norton Lecture ("Wordsworth and Coleridge") on Coleridge's "doctrine of fancy and imagination," quoting the definitions of imagination in Chapter XIII and in Chapter I: "Repeated meditations led me first to suspect . . . that Fancy and Imagination were two distinct and widely different faculties, instead of being, according to the general belief, either two names with one meaning, or at furthest, the lower and higher degrees of one and the same power" (4.631).

19. TSE excerpts and translates from Étienne Gilson's *Saint Thomas d'Aquin* in the series of texts and commentaries titled *Les Moralistes chrétiens* (Paris: V. Lecoffre, 1925): "Il résulte donc évidemment de là que c'est par la vision divine seule que des êtres intelligents peuvent trouver la vraie félicité . . ." (63); see 653, n.17.

20. Mary Paton Ramsay, *Les Doctrines médiévales chez Donne, le poète metaphysician de l'Angleterre (1573-1631)* (London: Oxford UP, 1917); see 2.628-29.

21. In five appendices, Ramsay lists the authors cited by Donne in *Bianthanatos* (1646), *Pseudo-Martyr* (1610), *Ignatius his Conclave* (1611), *Sermons* (1634-60), and *Essays in Divinity* (1651).

22. See TSE's note on Hooker in his second Clark lecture (2.629, n.4*)

23. Father Robert Bellarmine was the author of *Disputations on the Controversies of the Christian Faith* (1586-93). Dr. Anthony Rudd was the dean of Gloucester from 1584 to 1594.

24. See 2.629, nn.7-10.

25. See 2.629-30, nn.11-16.

26. Edmund Gosse points out in *The Life and Letters of John Donne* that Donne made one of "the very rare Elizabethan references" (I:41) to Dante in his Fourth Satire: "My precious soul began, the wretchednesse / Of suiters at court to mourne, and a trance / Like his, who dreamt he saw hell, did advance / It self on mee, Such men as he saw there, / I saw at court" (Grierson I:164).

27. TSE had earlier distinguished among the prose of Donne, Hooker, Taylor and other types of theologians, including Bacon and Thomas Browne, in "The Prose of the Preacher" (1929) (3.525). TSE had written of Taylor in his Introduction to Pound's *Selected Poems* (1928): "To me, Pope is poetry and Jeremy Taylor is prose" (3.525).

28. Shortly after Donne's ordination in Jan 1615, King James made him his chaplain and commanded him to preach before the court; see 2.631, n.25.

29. Ignatius of Loyola confirms in his autobiography that he read only chivalric romances in his youth, particularly *Amadis de Gaula* (1508), a romance about the knightly exploits of Amadis that was popular in France and Spain prior to the appearance of Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote* (1605-15); see 2.632, n.28.

30. In *Les Origines de la compagnie de Jésus; Ignace et Lainez* (Paris: Librairie Fischbacher, 1898), Herrmann Müller explores in detail the similarities of the six steps of a Jesuit novitiate's spiritual progress to specific Mohammedan practices.

31. TSE discussed the two-volume study by neo-Thomist philosopher Étienne Gilson, *La Philosophie au moyen âge*, in his 1926 review of Maurice de Wulf's *History of Medieval Philosophy* (2.870).

32. The Albigensian religious sect, established in Provence during the eleventh century, was based on the dualist Christian heresy of Manichaeism. In 1208, when local bishops and papal legates were unable to contain the growth and political power of its religious centers, Pope Innocent III launched an Albigensian Crusade. After twenty years of war, which led to the Peace of Paris (1229), the religious effects on the Albigenses were negligible. In 1233, Pope Gregory IX established the medieval Inquisition to investigate their heretical religious practices, but it took another century before the Inquisition and various clerical reforms brought about the death of Albigensian. TSE had written of the "possibly maligned" sect in "Dante" (1929): "That mysterious people had a religion of their own which was thoroughly and painfully extinguished by the Inquisition; so that we hardly know more about them than about the Sumerians" (3.733).

33. In his review of Praz's *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* (1925), TSE had pointed out Praz's extraordinary awareness "of the world of difference between the religion of the seventeenth century and of the thirteenth. It is the difference between psychology and metaphysics. Here Signor Praz is able to supply what has been a conspicuous defect of English criticism of Donne: a comparison between Donne and the metaphysical poets of the age of Dante. This is a point upon which he touches lightly, and which we wish he might examine in greater detail" (2.596).

34. *Trans*: "I easily understand, I say, that the imagination could be thus constituted if it is true that body exists; and because I can discover no other convenient mode of explaining it, I conjecture with probability that body does exist; but this is only with probability, and although I examine all things with care, I nevertheless do not find that from this distinct idea of corporeal nature, which I have in my imagination, I can derive any argument from which there will necessarily be deduced the existence of the body." From "Meditation VI," *Œuvres choisies de Descartes* (Paris: Garnier, 1865), 128. In *The Philosophical Works of Descartes*, vol 1, trans. Elizabeth S. Haldane and G. R. T. Ross (Cambridge UP, 1931), 186-87; see 2.636, n.36.

35. The Jewish philosopher Maimonides attempted a synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and the biblical texts of Hebrew theology. Donne's direct allusion to the Muslim philosopher Averroes, known for his commentaries on Aristotle and Plato's *Republic*, appears in his letter of 1612 to Sir Henry Goodyere. See Gosse, *The Life and Letters of John Donne*, 2:8; see 2.637, n.41.

36. "The Good-Morrow," ll. 1-9 (*MLP* 1); see 2.638 and 2.692, n.27.

Lecture II

The Conceit in Donne and Crashaw[1]

I want now to show, if I can, that the acceptance of an orderly system of thought results, with Dante and his friends, in a simple, direct and even austere manner of speech, while the maintenance in suspension of a number of philosophies, attitudes and partial theories which are enjoyed rather than believed, results, in Donne and some of his contemporaries, in an affected, tortuous and often over elaborate diction.

If you examine the figure of speech used by Dante, or by Cavalcanti, you will find that the difference between their images and those of Donne lies in the focus of interest. The interest of Dante lies in the idea or the feeling to be conveyed; the image is there to make the idea more intelligible, the feeling more apprehensible, the vision more visible. In Donne, the interest is dispersed, it may be, in the ingenuity of conveying the idea by that image; or the image may be more difficult than the idea; or the interest may lie in the compulsion, rather than in the discovery of resemblances. Part of the pleasure may derive from the incongruity which is overcome; part of the feeling is the feel of an idea, rather than the feeling of a person who accepts that idea. Let us look first at one image of Dante's which I have quoted elsewhere.[2] He is attempting to express the feeling of entering the first heaven, at the beginning of the *Paradiso*.

> Pareva a me che nube ne coprisse
>   lucida, spessa, solida e polita,
>   quasi adamante che lo sol ferisse.
>
> Per entro sè l'eterna margarita
>   ne recepette, com' acqua recepe
>   raggio di luce, permanendo unita.
>
> It seemed to me that a cloud enveloped us, shining, dense, firm and polished, like a diamond struck by the sun. Within itself the eternal pearl received us, as water doth receive a ray of light, though still itself uncleft.[3]

This imagery is by no means simple: we have the rapid transition from cloud to diamond, from pearl to water; and the aim is to convey one kind of image, a supra-sensible imagery, by another kind familiar to us. It is directed by a purpose of strict utility. The imagery is not meant to be interesting in itself; like all of Dante's similes and metaphors, it has a rational necessity.

I do not want to draw my distinctions too sharply. I am aware that between the image of necessity and the extreme conceit there are infinite degrees; we could find many images from various sources of which it would be difficult to say whether they were serviceable or ornamental. One can, however, hardly define the "conceit," a kind of figure of speech characteristic of the English, Italian and some Spanish poetry of the age of Donne, better than by saying that it is the antithesis of the kind of imagery in the passage just quoted from Dante. Not all of Donne's imagery is "conceited." Let us take two poems which are variations on the same theme: "The Funerall" and "The Relique." The first begins:

Who ever comes to shroud me, do not harme
        Nor question much
That subtile wreath of haire, which crowns my arme;
The mystery, the signe you must not touch,
        For 'tis my outward Soule,
Viceroy to that, which then to heaven being gone,
        Will leave this to controule;
And keepe these limbs, her Provinces, from dissolution.[4]

This is typical of Donne's procedure. The first three lines are peculiarly simple. The adjective "subtile" is exact; the simple statement is perfect; the only possible blemish is the slightly distracting metaphor hidden in the verb "crown." But with line 5 Donne becomes wholly and characteristically conceited; you find yourself in a tangle of souls and deputy-souls, kings, viceroys and territories, and almost forget that this is all about a strand of a lady's hair around his arm. And yet, though it is distracting, though it diminishes the intensity, though it may represent some inward disintegration, it is pleasing. The ingenuity of the imagery, which is self-conscious and calls attention to itself, is "wit," and it is serious; it is what the word "wit" meant at that time. We turn to the first stanza of "The Relique":

When my grave is broke up againe
    Some second ghest to entertaine,
    (For graves have learn'd that woman-head

To be to more than one a Bed)
And he that digs it, spies
A bracelet of bright haire about the bone,
Will he not let us alone,
And thinke that there a loving couple lies.
Who thought that this device might be some way
To make their soules, at the last busie day,
Meet at this grave, and make a little stay?[5]

In this version we perceive that the order is not the same. The simplicity is put in the middle instead of at the beginning. In some ways this version is the more effective. To set the discovery of the token long after death and burial, instead of at the moment of shrouding, declares a more perdurable passion, makes more significant the "bright hair" which outlasts the flesh and now clings about the bone. But the notion of the violation of the grave for "entertaining a second guest," and still more, in a poem celebrating constancy, the analogy of the impermanence of graves to the fickleness of women is an association of ideas peculiar to Donne's idiom, of which you can only say that you either like it or you don't. I do like it; but I feel that it indicates that something was beginning to go wrong with civilisation about that time; the mind goes back to Propertius and to Persius to find a similarity. There is something ominous when such very dissimilar thoughts and feelings become yoked in one poem. In the next stanza he gives full rein to his fancy:

If this fall in a time, or land,
Where mis-devotion doth command,
Then, he that digges us up, will bring
Us, to the Bishop, and the King,
To make us Reliques; then
Thou shalt be a Mary Magdalen, and I
A something else thereby;
All women shall adore us, and some men;
And since, at such time, miracles are sought,
I would have that age by this paper taught
What miracles wee harmelesse lovers wrought.[6]

Here you see, Donne has become distracted from the meaning of the bracelet about the bone; he is occupied with fanciful consequences of the first assumption. His method is frequently like this, to proceed from the greater to the less, from the central to the peripheral, from the passionate to the reflective. And in this he is honest to his own feelings. For passion unless of an astounding simplicity and intensity, or unless it be sustained by a high philosophy which transmutes it into something else, must always fade out. In Donne it fades into the play of suggested ideas; and Donne is the great ruler of that borderland of fading and change. In Dante we find complete coherence and integrity, in Donne disintegration, in Jules Laforgue the conscious irony of conflict between feeling, and the intellectual interpretation and dignity which feeling wishes to give itself, and reason. That is only another stage of disintegration.

Signor Mario Praz, in his admirable study of Donne, remarks shrewdly that "whilst in other singers the whole poem vibrates under the impulse of the first impetus, with Donne on the other hand the impulse is suddenly . . . broken by an anticlimax of ratiocination";[7] and I would suggest that one of the reasons why I find Donne so sympathetic is that we also, provided with no philosophy which can assign a serious and dignified place to the original impulse, take refuge in the anti-climax of ratiocination; only with us, the contrast is more conscious and complete. What I wish to make explicit is that there is no standard of good writing by which you can object to the kinds of figure of speech which Donne and other poets of his time employ. Even when they do not make sense, they have their own necessity. Let us examine a quatrain of the beautiful poem, "The Extasie":

Where, like a pillow on a bed,
A Pregnant banke swel'd up, to rest
The violets reclining head,
Sat we two, one anothers best.[8]

Now if you choose to look at it in that way, this is about as hideous a mixture of tropes as one could find. To compare a bank to a pillow does neither dignify nor elucidate; and it is surely superfluous to add "on a bed," since a pillow may be presumed to have much the same shape wherever it is disposed. This unhappy simile comes into collision with an equally forlorn metaphor: the bank is pregnant. Having already learned that the bank was shaped like a pillow, we hardly need to be informed that it was pregnant, unless an earthquake was preparing, which was not the case. The pregnant bank swells, which is a rather unfortunate type of ambiguity; it might be in the process of swelling, which is not what Donne ought to mean, as the whole scene is to be as static as possible; he means rather, "was swollen" or perhaps swells like a wave. We then learn at last why the bank had swelled: it did this in order to provide a pillow for the drooping head of the violet. But for this accommodating behaviour of the bank to be justified, the violet must be imagined as growing, not on the bank, but beside it; and if the bank swelled only just sufficiently to support the head of the violet, it was hardly of sufficient size to deserve the name of bank. Finally, it is a violation of the order of nature to conceive of the violet as antecedent to the bank, unless we affirm that the final cause of banks is the support of violets' heads. So here, as a critic like Dr. Johnson or Jeffrey might put it, are four lines wasted to let us know that the lovers sat upon a bank.[9]

Well, that is one way of looking at it. And it is often a useful exercise to take a figure of speech to pieces: if it can be put together again it is all right. Walter Pater observes that "the meaning" (of poetry) – I should say rather of some kinds of poetry – "reaches us through ways not distinctly traceable by the understanding";[10] and I think that there is a meaning to this stanza of Donne, an emotive meaning, which could perhaps not be conveyed by less confused imagery. You certainly will not get very much satisfaction out of the poetry of this period unless you can receive the meanings expressed in this way. Let me take an extreme specimen from Crashaw. He has a poem called "The Tear." The tear is shining in the eye of the Blessed Virgin, and each stanza deals with the tear under some new figure of speech – a form of verse popular at the time in which Crashaw is specially adept.

> What bright soft thing is this?
>   Sweet Mary thy faire eyes expence?
> A moist spark it is,
> A watry Diamond; from whence
> The very terme I think was found,
> The water of a Diamond.

"Soft thing" is good, for a tear; "moist spark" is still better; "The water of a diamond" is an excellent pass of pate.[11]

> O 'tis not a teare,
> 'Tis a star about to drop
>   From thine eye its spheare,
> The Sun will stoop and take it up,
> Proud will his sister be to weare
> This thine eyes jewell in her eare.

Readers of Miss Sitwell's poetry should not find this difficult.[12]

> Faire drop, why quak'st thou so?
> Cause thou streight must lay thy head
> In the dust? O no,
> The dust shall never be thy bed;
> A pillow for thee will I bring,
> Stuft with down of Angels wing.[13]

This is better than Donne's pillow for the drooping violet; a pillow is to be stuffed with angel feathers for the drooping head of a tear. Now this is not really funny; it is perfectly serious poetry. Crashaw knew quite well what he was about; it is for a serious effect, and an effect which could be got in no other way. It is a mistake to suppose that a simile or a metaphor is always something meant to be visible to the imagination; and even when it is meant to be visible, that all its parts are meant to be visible at once. Examine a sonnet by a modern poet – I say modern because I have had a friend[14] who was a friend of his – Stéphane Mallarmé, "M'introduire dans ton histoire," and you will find in the fourteen lines four or five images which it is quite impossible to imagine or conceive simultaneously, and at least one which cannot be visualised at all:

> Dis si je ne suis pas joyeux
> Tonnerre et rubis aux moyeux
> De voir en l'air que ce feu troue
>
> Avec des royaumes épars
> Comme mourir pourpre la roue
> Du seul vespéral de mes chars.

"Thunder and rubies up to the wheel hub" is just as difficult to figure out as the career of Crashaw's tear; and it is only when you have an impression of the sonnet as a whole that it comes into place, and has meaning.[15] The poet's business is to know what effect he intends to produce, and then to get it by fair means or foul. There is the element of rationality, the element of precision, and there is also the element of vagueness which may be used; and we must remember that one distinction between poetry and prose is this, that in poetry the word, each word by itself, though only being fully itself in context, has absolute value. Poetry is incantation, as well as imagery. "Thunder and rubies" cannot be seen, heard or thought together, but their collocation here brings out the connotation of each word.[16] You will find in Shelley or Swinburne tropical constructions that will no more bear analysis than what I have quoted from Donne and Crashaw.

Violets that plead for pardon
        Or pine for fright[17]

are no more respectable than Donne's violet; and I confess that I myself do not like this use of the pathetic fallacy; but I can see that what Swinburne was after was a particular association of our feeling towards violets and our feeling towards small pathetic fragile human beings.

The Elizabethan lyric had been more truly song – verse meant to be sung – than any of the Jacobean or Caroline. The focus becomes shifted, if sometimes ever so little, from sound to sense; from the sound of the word to the sound of the sense of the word, so to speak; to the consciousness of the meaning of the word and a pleasure in that sound having that meaning. Parallel to this transition [was] the shift, of which I have spoken, from metaphysics to psychology; the word is not merely the sound with a meaning; the word becomes interesting for its meaning elsewhere as well as for its meaning in the context; for its own meaning as well as what the writer means to mean by it. In its beginnings, the conceit as used by Donne is no more than the development in poetry of an expository device known to preachers from the earliest times: the extended, repeated, detailed, interminable simile. The Buddha used it in the Fire Sermon; Richard of St. Victor uses it in his interpretations of the Scriptures – as Noah's Ark, for instance; and Donne, in his own sermons, employed this device in a way very similar to that of Bishop Latimer in his sermons.[18] One of Donne's most successful extended conceits is in a beautiful poem, "A Valediction."[19]

As virtuous men passe mildly away
    And whisper to their soules, to goe,
Whilst some of their sad friends doe say,
    The breath goes now, and some say, no:

So let us melt, and make no noise,
    No teare-floods, nor sigh-tempests move,
'Twere profanation of our joyes
    To tell the layetie our love.

Moving of th'earth brings harmes and feares,

Men reckon what it did and meant,
But trepidation of the spheares,
Though greater farre, is innocent.

Here is no flaw; no one has ever handled this quatrain movement better than Donne. The astronomical figure may give some trouble; but it has a legitimate effect of over-statement: it is to say, that so huge an event as this separation of lovers is like the immense but imperceptible movements of heavenly bodies.

Dull sublunary lovers love
(Whose soule is sense) cannot admit
Absence, because it doth remove
Those things which elemented it.

These lovers are (in modern language) "cosmic"; all others are "sublunary."

But we by a love, so much refin'd,
That our selves know not what it is,
Inter-assured of the mind,
Care lesse, eyes, lips, and hands to misse.

Our two soules therefore, which are one,
Though I must goe, endure not yet
A breach, but an expansion,
Like gold to ayery thinnesse beate.

The conceit here comes pretty near to the compliment. Donne is not here expounding or implying any theory of the soul in which he could be said to believe. At least, I feel confident that he is not, and hope that he is not; for his statement "our two souls . . . which are one" is directly controverted by St. Thomas, who, in combating a suggestion of St. Augustine by a reference to the *De Anima*, observes:

> Cum impossibile sit plurium numero differentium esse unam formam, sicut impossibile est quod eorum sit unum esse; oportet principium intellectivum multiplicari secundum multiplicationem corporum.[20]

It is impossible for two bodies to have one soul. But it is never quite certain what Donne believes, or whether he believes anything. The figure does make intelligible an idea, but there is properly no idea until you get the figure: if gold can be beaten out very thin, so love can be the same even if the two terms in the relation are at the opposite ends of the earth. When Guido Cavalcanti says

> Amor, che nasce di simil piacere,
> Dentro del cor si posa,
> Formando di disio nova persona,
> Ma fa la sua virtù 'n vizio cadere

he is speaking literally.[21] He is maintaining much the same theory as that of *Purgatorio* XVIII: "Then, even as fire moves upward by reason of its form, whose nature it is to ascend, there where it endures longest in its material; so the enamoured mind falls to desire, which is a spiritual movement, and never rests until the object of its love makes it rejoice."[22]

It is not quite clear how much Spanish Crashaw knew. It is reported that he picked it up, with his first knowledge of Italian, by solitary study. That he knew Italian well is more probable than that he knew Spanish well. He may have read the Life of St. Theresa (Mother Theresa as she then was) in an English translation of 1612. Her autobiography is almost essential to an understanding of Crashaw. It is not only an interesting book, but a really great book, and also a feminine book (if I may be pardoned the adjective), by a woman who was an amazingly efficient organiser and administrator (she would have made a great University President); it is great because of the great beauty of character, and the transparent honesty and scrupulousness and profound piety of the writer. She is not the profound philosopher that is her disciple St. John of the Cross; she is more loveable, more human, and in that time much more influential. When, for instance, she tells us that the Lord took her crucifix from her, and returned it adorned with pearls, she adds conscientiously, that no one was ever able to see the pearls except herself.[23] Much seventeenth-century, or baroque poetry, reminds one of a crucifix ornamented with pearls, and they are too often cultured pearls. I must say emphatically that my view of St. Theresa is not that of modern psychologists, or of the psychologically minded laity who cannot read her innocent confessions without a titter; and when I say that her influence was towards the substitution of human for divine love for divine objects, I am not, as I may appear to be, giving away a trick to such people. I have in mind, here, rather the difference between the scholastic mysticism which is resumed, as is everything else, in St. Thomas Aquinas, and the Renaissance mysticism, at which I have already hinted. The earlier mysticism was more intellectual, more comprehensive, more Aristotelian – and for that matter more Spinozistic – Spinozistic without the artifice and pose of Spinoza[24] – and more balanced than Spinoza's. The later mysticism is less philosophical, less cosmological, and far more psychological. Whatever modern psychologists may think of St. John of the Cross, he was a greater psychologist, in his analysis of the mind and the heart, than any of them. I am considering St. Theresa also, not as a clinical subject for psychologists, but as a psychologist herself: of the theology of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, St. Augustine, not St. Thomas, is the forerunner. The world of St. Thomas and of Dante is for me a world in which the real values, so far as I can apprehend them, are best arranged as I can understand them: with the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries my sympathies are more imperfect. Dante's sense of values, as illustrated in his sensibility, seems to me just right. His words before Beatrice appears to him in the *Purgatorio* put exactly his feeling toward Beatrice in heaven – the already sublimated still further sublimated feeling, but still human – as the fire runs through him – "Cognosco i segni dell' antica fiamma";[25] and in the ultimate vision he is an exact trinitarian and no tritheist. But of the poetry of the *seicento* Signor Praz says truly that "the general tendency of the epoch was to make the divine passions a true mirror of the human passions."[26] But when I say that I insist that the *seicento* was still religious, I think that Praz will agree with me; and I am not to be disconcerted by your calling the baroque writers "erotic." Of course they are erotic; the love of God is erotic: that is only a tautology after all. The difference between human and divine love is much subtler than any of the distinctions which modern psychologists are able to draw. What I question is dependent upon the difference between ontology and psychology; and it is the psychologism, not the supposed eroticism, which lays a poet like Crashaw open to the charge of being a voluptuary of religious emotion. We may say, as a parallel, that Donne was a voluptuary of thought: the last two or three generations have suffered from voluptuaries of thought, such as Renan, Anatole France, André Gide, Bernard Shaw, and Mr. Aldous Huxley.[27†] Crashaw has a more ingenious wit – and he is very witty – he has stronger feelings, than his Italian models; of all the poets of the age, he is the one who is nearest to St. Theresa herself. Donne enters into his mind; the Italians into his language; but St. Theresa enters into and takes possession of his heart as she could not possess his more frigid Italian prototypes. The sensationalism which seems deliberated in Marino seems spontaneous in Crashaw. But as with Donne the thought is split up into thoughts, so with Crashaw the emotion is split up into emotions; instead of one emotion informing the whole poem, you get emotion piled on emotion, image on image – much as a man may go on drinking because he is terrified of becoming sober.

Let me compare one verse of Crashaw's paraphrase of the hymn *Vexilla Regis* (the Good Friday hymn)[28] with the original of Fortunatus. (This translating and paraphrasing [of] hymns and psalms was a frequent exercise of the epoch).

Vexilla regis prodeunt,
Fulget crucis mysterium,
Quo carne carnis conditor
Suspensus est patibulo . . .

which is humbly translated in our service:

The royal banners forward go;
The Cross shines forth in mystic glow;
Where he in flesh, our flesh who made,
Our sentence bore, our ransom paid.[29]

You will note the suggestion of wit in the line "quo carne carnis conditor" ("Where he in flesh, our flesh who made"). This is what Crashaw makes of it:

Look up, languishing Soul! Lo where the fair
BADG of thy faith calls back thy care,
        And biddes thee ne'er forget
        Thy life is one long Debt
Of love to Him, who on this painful TREE
Paid back the flesh he took for thee.[30]

You observe the exhortation to the "languishing soul" (in Crashaw's time souls readily languished and swooned), the introduction of the distracting conceit of debt and repayment. In his translation of the next stanza we get a "nest of loves," an "amorous flood," a "wedding" of water and blood.[31] And as in general, in Crashaw's poetry, we get a sequence of emotional disturbances, rather than any structure of emotion; it is, as with his Italian prototypes, a kind of radical empiricism.[32] The trouble is with the head, rather than with the heart, so far as those two organs can, in poetical criticism, be dissociated. The *trecento* had an exact statement of intellectual order; the *seicento* had an exact statement of intellectual disorder; the nineteenth century had a vague statement of intellectual disorder. The exactness of Crashaw is nowhere better illustrated than in the lines to the Saint:

O thou undaunted daughter of desires!
By all thy dower of lights and fires;
By all the eagle in thee, all the dove;
By all thy lives and deaths of love;
By thy large draughts of intellectual day,
And by thy thirsts of love more large than they;
By all thy brim-fill'd bowls of fierce desire,
By thy last morning's draught of liquid fire;
By the full kingdom of that final kiss
That seized thy parting soul, and seal'd thee His;
By all the Heav'n thou hast in Him
(Fair sister of the seraphim!);
By all of Him we have in thee;
Leave nothing of myself in me.
Let me so read thy life, that I
Unto all life of mine may die![33]

I should not like to quote anything more of Crashaw, or by anybody else, after reading that. A little acquaintance with the Italian and the English verse of the period enables us to recognise the lights and the fires, lives and deaths and thirsts; but here they are fused beyond analysis and perfected beyond criticism. It is the ultimate religious expression of that period of strange intellectual disintegration and religious intensity.

Anyone who has remembered the opening sentence of this lecture will at this point have noticed an apparent inconsistency. For I said "the maintenance in suspension of a number of philosophies, attitudes and partial theories which are enjoyed rather than believed, results, in Donne and some of his contemporaries, in an affected, tortuous and often over elaborate diction."

I did not wish to give the impression that John Donne was not, according to the sense of the words to-day, a Christian believer. We must keep in mind that not belief only, but the meaning of the word "belief," differs for different individuals and more certainly for different times; I hope still that Mr. I. A. Richards may some day throw some light upon the meaning of this word, for if he cannot, I do not know anyone else who can.[34] Donne was definitely a Christian believer; but the object of belief was not the same for him that it was in the thirteenth century. Crashaw was, if anyone ever was, a Christian believer; but for him again, the object of belief was not the same that it had been. The essential is of course always to be able to say *Credo*; but the objects of this verb vary a good deal in meaning from age to age. Jules Laforgue also was among the prophets, who say *Credo*, not among those lost people who say *Dubito*. But what were the objects of this nineteenth-century creed? When we have come to a conclusion on that matter, the stage is set for modern poetry.

NOTES

1. TSE delivered his second Turnbull Lecture in Latrobe Hall on 1 Feb, drawing upon Clark Lectures III, IV, VI, and a summary of VII while adding new material throughout.

2. TSE quoted the following lines (31-36) from Canto II of the *Paradiso* in his first essay on "Dante" (1920), where in discussing the scale of emotions expressed in Dante's poetry he includes the lines as "a concrete presentation of the most elusive" (2.232); see also 2.670.

3. Translation slightly altered from *DC3* 17.

4. "The Funerall," ll. 1-8 (*MLP* 18); see 2.672, n.9.

5. "The Relique," ll. 1-11 (*MLP* 21); see 2.673, n.11.

6. Lines 12-22; see 2.674, n.14.

7. TSE's translation from Praz's *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra* (102); see 2.675, n. 15.

8. "The Extasie," ll. 1-4 (*MLP* 16); see 2.655.

9. TSE refers to Johnson's criticism of the metaphysical poets in his "Life of Cowley," where he is severely critical of their "labored particularities," "false conceits," "mixed wit," "useless talk," and other "inelegant applications" of poetic language (*Lives* 9, 10, 20, 25, 29). And also to Francis Jeffrey, founder-editor of the *Edinburgh Review* (1802-29), a critic who took Johnson as his master in attacking the stylistic excesses and rhetorical diffuseness of the romantic poets, including Wordsworth, about whom he writes in his 1815 review of *The White Doe of Rylstone*, which draws upon several "venerable compositions": "but it unfortunately happens that while the hobbling versification, the mean diction, and flat stupidity of these models are very exactly copied . . . their rude energy, manly simplicity, and occasional felicity of expression, have totally disappeared; and, instead of them, a large allowance of the author's own metaphysical sensibility, and mystical wordiness, is forced into an unnatural combination with the borrowed beauties." *Jeffrey's Literary Criticism*, ed. D. Nichol Smith (London: Henry Frowde, 1910), 128.

10. From "The School of Giorgione" (1877), added to the third edition of *The Renaissance* (1888); see "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry" (4.828).

11. An allusion to Stephano's description of Trinculo's sally of wit in *The Tempest* IV.i.243-45: "Wit shall not go unrewarded while I am King of this country. 'Steal by line and level' is an excellent pass of pate – there's another garment for't." See 2.711.

12. In "The Post-Georgians" (1919), TSE described the "weaknesses of technique" and "crude and exaggerated" colors that undermined Sitwell's poetry (2.18). In "The Devotional Poets of the Seventeenth Century" (1930), TSE quoted these two stanzas from "The Teare" as

examples of Crashaw "at his worst," citing the final stanza in particular as "the climax of absurdity" and asking "who else would provide a pillow stuffed with angel's down for the head of a tear?" (4.79)

13. "The Teare," stanzas 1, 2, and 6, in *Poems*, 71-72; see 2.711, n.32.

14. The friend was Paul Valéry, friend and disciple of Mallarmé. TSE wrote of their friendship after Valéry's death: "Only as many meetings, I think, as could be counted on the fingers: but these meetings were distributed at significant points in the twenty-one years ending in July, 1945, twenty-one years during which Valéry, already recognized as a great poet, came to be a figure symbolic of the Europe of our time . . . Of some great men, one's prevailing impression may be of goodness, or of inspiration, or of wisdom: I think the prevailing impression one received of Valéry was of intelligence" (*Quarterly Review of Literature*, Spring 1947, 212).

15. "M'introduire dans ton histoire" (1886), ll. 9-14. *Trans*:

Am I not (whose hub is
All thunder and rubies)
Glad to see the winged wheel

With scattered realms fire-shot
As though dying purple
Of my one dusk-chariot.

Trans. Keith Bosley, *Mallarmé: The Poems*, 191. TSE adapted lines 10-11 as "Garlic and sapphires in the mud / Clot the bedded axle-tree" and used them as the concluding lines in drafts (Houghton) of "WORDS FOR AN OLD MAN, dedicated 'to Stéphane Mallarmé.'" The poem was later published as "Lines for an Old Man" without the dedication and with line 9, "Dis si je ne suis pas joyeux," adapted as "Tell me if I am not glad!" for the concluding line. TSE then made them the opening lines of Part II of *Burnt Norton*.

16. For TSE's view of Mallarmé and incantation, see "Note sur Mallarmé et Poe" (2.844).

17. Misquoted from Swinburne's "Before the Mirror," ll. 3-4, from *Poems and Ballads* (1865); *read*: "Snowdrops that plead for pardon / And pine for fright"; see 2.712, n.38.

18. See 2.677, n.22.

19. "A Valediction: forbidding mourning," ll. 1-12; followed by ll. 13-24 (*MLP* 14-15); see 2.677, n.25.

20. *Trans*: "Since it is impossible that several numerically different things should have one form, just as it is impossible for them to have one act of being, it is necessary for the intellective principle to be multiplied according to the multiplication of bodies" (TSE's emphasis); from *Summa theologiae*, Ia, Question 76, Article 2; see 2.659, n.33.

21. From *Ballata* XII: *read*: "de simil piacere, / Dentro dal cor si posa / Formando di desio"; printed in *Pound's Cavalcanti*, ed. David Anderson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1983), 158; trans. Ezra Pound, 159: "Love that is born of loving like delight / Within my heart sojourneth / And fashions a new person from desire, / Yet toppleth down to vileness all his might." See 2.678, n.25.

22. "Poi come il foco movesi in altura, / per la sua forma, ch' è nata a salire / là dove più in sua material dura: / così l'animo preso entra in disire, / ch' è moto spiritale, e mai non posa / fin che la cosa amata il fa gioire." (*DC2* 216-17, ll.28-33); see 2.678, n.26.

23. TSE recalls the vision described in Chapter XXIX, para. 8 of *The Life of St. Teresa of Jesus*, 2nd edn, trans. David Lewis (London: St. Anselm's Society, 1888), where the returned crucifix is not adorned with pearls but made of supernatural stones (231). See 2.720, n.15.

24. TSE wrote in his 1927 review of Abraham Wolf's edition of *The Oldest Biography of Spinoza*: "The figure of Spinoza has been almost more important in the last hundred years than the philosophy of Spinoza. Few people have mastered the 'Ethics,' but everyone knows that Spinoza polished lenses; few people have read the *Tractatus Politicus*, but the whole world has been impressed by his excommunication from the Jewish Church . . . So that the celebration of the 250th anniversary has a different meaning from the anniversary of an Aristotle, an Aquinas, or a Kant; it is the recognition not so much of a philosophy as of a personality in which certain human ideals seem to be realized" (3.56).

25. *Purgatorio* XXX, 48; *read*: "conosco"; when Beatrice appears before him, Dante turns to Virgil to say that nearly all of his blood trembles; *trans*: "I recognise the tokens of the ancient flame" (*DC2* 380-81); see 2.720, n.18.

26. TSE translates from Praz's *Secentismo e marinismo in Inghilterra*: "La general tendenza dell'epoca è di rendere le passioni divine uno specchio fedele delle passioni umane" (148); see 2.708, n.19.

27†. The following sentence was crossed out: "There have not been many voluptuaries of religious emotion in the same period." Provoked by Haakon Chevalier's study of Anatole France in *The Ironic Temper* (1932), TSE was preparing an attack on four of these "voluptuaries of thought" for his "Commentary" in the *Criterion* of Apr 1933: Ernest Renan, Anatole France, André Gide, and his English contemporary, Aldous Huxley. He attacks them for their "puny" intellectual sophistication, their "arrested development," and their affected use of irony "to give the appearance of a philosophy of life" (4.516-17).

28. Hymn 106, *Vexilla regis prodeunt* ("The royal banners forward go"), is found in the Anglican hymnal, *Hymns Ancient and Modern* (London: William Clowes & Son, 1909), 148. It has been in general use at Passiontide at least since the tenth century and is now sung in the Church of England "From the fifth Sunday in Lent to the Wednesday before Easter." See *Historical Companion to Hymns Ancient and Modern*, ed. Maurice Frost (London: William Clowes & Sons, 1962), 187.

29. TSE quotes the first stanza of the Rev. John Mason Neale's translation in *Medieval Hymns and Sequences* (London: Joseph Masters, 1851), 6, as used in *Hymns Ancient and Modern*.

30. "Vexilla Regis, the Hymn of the Holy Crosse," ll. 1-6; see 2.709, n.26.

31. Second stanza:

Lo, how the streames of life, from that full nest
Of loves, thy lord's too liberall breast,
        Flow in an amorous flood
        Of WATER wedding BLOOD,
With these he wash't thy stain, transfer'd thy smart,
And took it home to his own heart.

32. In his sixth Clark lecture, "Crashaw," TSE states: "it leads us to William James's *Radical Empiricism*." See 2.710, n.28.

33. "Upon the Book and Picture of the Seraphical Saint Teresa," ll. 93-108, comprising the last sixteen of twenty-four new lines added to the poem after the first version was published

in 1648; as published in TSE's copy of *The Oxford Book of English Verse 1250-1900*, 367; see 2.716, n.50.

34. TSE and Richards had carried on their private and public dialogue on the problem of belief since Richards wrote in the *Criterion* of July 1925 that in *The Waste Land* TSE had effected "a complete severance between his poetry and *all* beliefs" (520). TSE responded in "A Note on Poetry and Belief" (1927), "Literature, Science, and Dogma" (1927), "Dante" (1929), and "Poetry and Propaganda" (1930). For a summary of their correspondence and essays into the 1930s, see the Introduction to vol 3, n.4 (3.xlii).

Lecture III

Laforgue and Corbière in our Time[1]

It is not always true that the greatest poet of an age is the most representative of his age. All of the most interesting French poetry from the seventies of the last century to our own day is derivative from Baudelaire. Baudelaire was a great poet, and at his greatest is almost contradictory to his age; perhaps when a much longer span of time has elapsed, it will be possible to see him as representative, but certainly not of his own limited period of time as we can see it in this short perspective of the time since his death. "Whilst Verlaine and Rimbaud continued Baudelaire in the order of sentiment and sensation," says Paul Valéry, "Mallarmé prolonged his work in the domain of perfection and poetic purity."[2] We may add that Laforgue and Corbière prolonged his work in the domain of self-consciousness; and the disintegration and the strife between thought and feeling is more clearly visible in these minor men than in the master, who resisted the corrosion of his own time better than could the minor men.

Jules Laforgue was a young man who died at the age of twenty-seven in the year 1877. He was very poor, he became reader to a German princess, and during his residence in Berlin acquired the language and a good deal of German philosophy, especially Kant, Schopenhauer and Hartmann. He married a young English governess, and had, or acquired, some knowledge of her language and literature also. He was tuberculous, and died in poverty; I believe that his widow died not long after him.[3] I think that the first note about him in English was by Sir Edmund Gosse; though I was indebted to the attractive study by Mr. Arthur Symons in his book *The Symbolist Movement*.[4] His poetry, and even his prose, is of course immature. He was a young man of ardent feelings, of an active intellect fascinated by abstractions, and with a remarkable gift for metaphysical emotion. He had a passionate craving for order: that is, that every feeling should have its intellectual equivalent, its philosophical justification, and that every idea should have its emotional equivalent, its sentimental justification. The world which could have satisfied his nature, therefore, was Dante's world; but there were no golden builders[5] of such a world in Paris or Berlin in the seventies. The disintegration of which I have spoken in connexion with

Donne and Crashaw reached a much more advanced stage with Laforgue: for Laforgue, life was consciously divided into thought and feeling; but his feelings were such as required an intellectual completion, a beatitude, and the philosophical systems which he embraced were so much felt as to require a sensuous completion. The struggle of such a man as D. H. Lawrence might be expressed in somewhat the same terms, perhaps; though the two men were in themselves extremely different, and Lawrence's way of salvation, or what he thought the way of salvation, could never have been Laforgue's. It is only the world they lived in, and their affliction by it, that has any resemblance. The metaphysicality of Laforgue extends in two directions: the intellectualising of the sensibility and the emotionalising of the idea. Laforgue's irony, as in his fine prose *Hamlet* in the volume called *Moralités Légendaires*, an irony employed against himself, ensues from the conflict.

> – If (says Laertes when he meets Hamlet at the grave of Ophelia), you were not a wretched madman, and quite irresponsible according to the most recent investigations of medical science, you would be obliged to give me immediate satisfaction for the death of my honourable father and my sister-that highly accomplished young woman . . .
> – O Laertes, that's all one to me. But be sure that I allow for your point of view . . .
> – Gracious Heaven, (says Laertes) what lack of any moral sense! . . . .
> They sent to search for the corpse with torches of the best quality.[6]

His self-consciousness is of course partly adolescent, but is of a devouring intensity which renders it significant:

> Bref, j'allais me donner d'un "Je Vous Aime"
> Quand je m'avisai non sans peine
> Que [d'abord] je ne me possédais pas [bien] moi-même.[7]

The "je m'avisai" is always driving him back to torment himself, just as the disparity between the meaning of human lives and what they ought to mean is always driving his Hamlet back upon himself. He is one who "ne croit à son Moi qu'à ses moments perdus";[8] but is yet haunted by the need of living some philosophy, if only the despairing abstractions of Hartmann's *Philosophy of the Unconscious*. Had he been born later – and had he not been born a Frenchman – he might have fallen into the trammels of psycho-analysis; yet there is a masculine toughness and a keen ironic sense of humour essentially in his nature. He echoes sometimes the prayer of

Baudelaire, "Seigneur, donnez-moi la force et le courage / De contempler mon corps et mon coeur sans dégoût."[9] His torments of sensibility, of body and soul, are expressed, for example, at the end of one of the poems which he calls "Dimanches":

Ah, que je te les tordrais avec plaisir,
Ce corps bijou, ce coeur [à] tenor . . .
Non, non, c'est sucer la chair d'un coeur élu,
Adorer d'incurables organs . . .
Et ce ne'est pas sa chair qui me serait tout,
Et je ne serais pas qu'un grand coeur pour elle . . .
L'âme et la chair, la chair et l'âme
C'est l'esprit édénique et fier
D'être un peu l'Homme avec la Femme . . .

–Allons, dernier des poètes!
Toujours enfermé tu te rendras malade!
Vois, il fait beau temps, tout le monde est dehors,
Va donc acheter deux sous d'ellébore,
Ça te fera une petite promenade.[10]

Later, in the same group of poems, he speaks of "les jeunes filles inviolables et frêles" going to church, and adds somewhat pompously:

Moi, je ne vais pas à l'église;
Moi, je suis le Grand Chancelier de l'Analyse . . .[11]

It is noticeable how often such words as "l'inconscient," "le Néant," "l'absolu," with similar terms from the vocabulary of the philosophers he had read recur, and such figures as the Valkyrie, and other images from the musical dramas of Wagner. Laforgue gives the nearest verse realisation of the philosophies of Schopenhauer and Hartmann; it would be too much to say that he exactly believed them, but he certainly felt them, not in the way in which Wagner did, though he was influenced by Wagner too. His critical intelligence was incapable of drugging itself with emotion as Wagner seems to have done. The system of Schopenhauer does not work, but for Laforgue it collapses in a different ruin from that of *Tristan und Isolde* and *Parsifal*.[12]

Laforgue is surprisingly modern. As the *surréalistes*, in their peculiar mode of escape from life, look back to Rimbaud and Lautréamont[13] for their inspiration, so another type of poet is represented by Laforgue. Here is a piece of modern prose which might have been written in 1920, but which Laforgue wrote many years ago while Victoria was queen.

> The public cries recommence. Important notice! Redemption loan has weakened, Panama Canal shares firm. Auctions, experts. Advances against securities quoted or unquoted, purchase of unencumbered properties or annuities; advances against expectations; time-tables, annuals, new-year's gifts. Circular tours at reduced prices. Madame Ludovic predicts the future, daily from 2 to 4. The Children's Paradise: toys for children and cotillion favours for adults . . . Sole agency! Cylinder machines Marioni! Everything guaranteed, everything for nothing! Oh the rapidity of life also sole agency . . .[14]

There seems to have been something wrong with things even before the treaty of Versailles.[15] Laforgue is certainly in revolt against something, a revolt which, as with D. H. Lawrence, is enacted on a deeper level of consciousness than that which deals with political and social notions. And he is at once the sentimentalist dreaming about the *jeune fille* at the piano or with her geraniums, and the pathologist commenting on her reflexes.[16] What he wants, of course, is some way of salvation in which both the mind and the feelings, the soul and the body, shall cooperate towards fulness of life; and I am afraid that it is neither the *jeune fille* of Laforgue's delicate and chaste imagination, nor Lady Chatterley who holds the key to that new world which is perhaps a very old one.[17] It was not Miss Leah Lee, the pretty English governess, or post-Kantian pseudo-Buddhism that could do the trick.[18]

If we can compare Laforgue to Donne, we can, with very great reservations, compare Tristan Corbière to Crashaw. Not that Corbière was a religious poet, any more than Laforgue; but the problems of poetry are not unrelated to the problems of theology. Corbière is a finer poet, at times, though a lesser and less interesting mind, than Laforgue. Laforgue was twenty-seven when he died in 1887; Corbière died in 1875 at the age of thirty; and they knew nothing about each other. In the work of Corbière there is less evidence of philosophic reading; he is less tormented by "the absolute," "the unconscious," but there is the same strange product of thought-feeling and feeling-thought. Like Crashaw, with Corbière the centre of gravity is more in the word and phrase, and he has phrases which recall, in our comparison, the concentrated conceit of Crashaw, but often with a savage humour, as when he calls Victor Hugo "Garde National épique";[19]

and, with a savage concision worthy of Villon or Dante, two lines from a remarkable poem, "La Rapsode foraine":

Là, ce tronc d'homme où croît l'ulcère,
Contre ce tronc d'arbre où croît le gui -

"This trunk of a man on which the ulcer grows, leaning against this trunk of a tree on which grows the mistletoe": that sudden collocation of the animal and the vegetable has a horror worthy of Dante.[20] Corbière's use of something approaching the conceit of Crashaw is more apparent in the series of "Petits Rondels pour après," exequies on the death of a poet presumably himself; for instance:

Va vite, léger peigneur de comètes
Les herbes au vent seront tes cheveux;
De ton oeil béant jailliront les feux
Follets, prisonniers dans les pauvres tétes . . .

Les fleurs de tombeau qu'on nomme amourettes
Foisonneront plein ton rire terreux,
Et les myosotis, ces fleurs d'oubliettes . . .[21]

only, as we notice in Laforgue, with much more sentimentality than we find in the seventeenth century.

In this very cursory survey of two French poets, I have had two things in mind. First to relate them to our present time, and second to relate them to "metaphysical poetry" in general, and so to arrive, if not at a definition, at least at a feeling of metaphysicality, and its relevance to our time. To take the first point first, what is the relevance of this French poetry of the seventies and eighties to us and our problems?

I perhaps am of all critics the most disqualified from judging. For I know that when I first came across these French poets, some twenty-three years ago, it was a personal enlightenment such as I can hardly communicate. I felt for the first time in contact with a tradition, for the first time, that I had, so to speak, some backing by the dead, and at the same time that I had something to say that might be new and relevant. I doubt whether, without the men I have mentioned – Baudelaire, Corbière, Verlaine, Laforgue, Mallarmé, Rimbaud – I should have been able to write poetry at all. This fact alone renders me unsuitable to be a critic of them. Without them, the Elizabethan and Jacobean poets would have been too remote and quaint, and Shakespeare and Dante too remote and great, to have helped me. I cannot but be aware, therefore, that in emphasising their importance for the present, I may be only defending myself. Yet I do think that they are important for our time; I do think that anyone who would understand contemporary literature should study that generation, not so much in England as in France; and not even so much the great progenitor, Baudelaire, as the minor epigoni. I conceive of literary criticism in the following way. The ideal literary critic should have both an intense concentration and an indefinite awareness. He should not be primarily concerned with sociology, or with psychology, or with politics, or with theology, or with any other ology; he should be primarily concerned with the word and the incantation; with the question whether the poet has used the right word in the right place, the rightness depending upon both the explicit intention and an indefinite radiation of sound and sense. He should differ from the practitioners of other sciences, not so much by what he needs to know and what he does not need to know – for indeed he needs to know everything – as by his centre of values: in the beginning was the word. In speech is both the highest level of consciousness and the deepest level of unconsciousness. By speech false values are maintained, or real values are revealed. The poet's first purpose is to amuse and unless he can amuse, all else is vain; but he speaks in parables.

The ultimate purpose, the ultimate value, of the poet's work is religious. I mean, that every stage of society tends to harden into a set of purely social values. Society tends to exert a pressure, such that every poet is either accepted or rejected, according to his fitness to the set of social values of the time; contemporary criticism is thus largely irrelevant; it observes Procrustean principles. When Byron, in words which I have often been tempted to quote in extenuation of my own writings, remarks

Some have accused me of a strange design
Against the creed and morals of this land
And trace it in this poem, every line;
I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be very fine,
But the fact is that I have nothing planned,
Except perhaps to be a moment merry . . .[22]

he is, at bottom, affirming that the actual social values, whatever they are, are not the same as the poet's; for at any moment the practical and the theoretical values will differ. The artist is the only genuine and profound revolutionist, in the following sense. The world always has, and always will, tend to substitute appearance for reality. The artist, being always alone, being heterodox when everyone else is orthodox, and orthodox when everyone else is heterodox, is the perpetual upsetter of conventional values, the restorer of the real. He may appear at one time to hold one extreme opinion, at another period another; but his function is to bring back humanity to the real.

Now the critic has to be aware of all this, but to stick to his job. The more narrowly and closely he defines his job, if he is a man of wide and not pedantic sympathies, the better he will do it. I see no reason why sociologists should not scrutinise poetry, or why psychologists should not analyse it; but this is not literary criticism. There is no reason why one should not try to write great poetry, except that great poetry is not written in that way: I mean that if one cares enough about poetry, "greatness" is not the aim or the criterion. The aim is not to emulate Shakespeare or Homer or Dante or anybody else; for if and so far as one is a poet these criteria and ambitions are nonsense. Poetry is in this respect like science: the aim of the true poet is not to be a "great poet," but to make a contribution to poetry: merely to say the true thing at one's time; to say the thing to be said in the circumstances, in the right way. One positive contribution towards poetry is all that one can hope to make; beyond that it does not matter whether one is Shakespeare or Jules Laforgue; whether one is "original" or "derivative." Greatness is not a state that poets really seek; greatness is a matter, so far as we are concerned, of chance, of what happens afterwards when we are dead; and that depends upon a great many things outside of ourselves. It has often been said that no man is a hero to his own valet; what is much more important is that no honest man can be a hero to himself; for he must be aware how many causes in world history, outside of abilities and genius, have been responsible for greatness.

In looking at the history of poetry, accordingly, from – may I say – a poet's point of view – the values are not quite those which you will learn of from any history of poetry. They will be much more what is vaguely called "technical"; the important poets will be those who have taught the people speech; and the people had in every generation to be taught to speak: the function of the poet at every moment is to make the inarticulate folk articulate; and as the inarticulate folk is almost always mumbling the speech, become jargon, of its ancestors or of its newspaper editors, the new language is never learnt without a certain resistance, even resentment. "Donner un sens plus pur aux mots de la tribu," Mallarmé said of Poe;[23] and this purification of language is not so much a progress, as it is a perpetual return to the real. I would have you understand, accordingly, that in talking about Dante, Donne and Laforgue as Three Metaphysical Poets I am not talking according to the, or any, scale of values which in a history of literature is deemed proper. But the scale of values in histories of literature is seldom the scale of values in life. I am aware that Dante deserves say ten pages, Donne one, and Laforgue a footnote. If I were a confessor of souls, would I give them that same rank in the confessional?

I ask for some revaluation of values in estimating the place of Laforgue and Corbière. I am all for considering literature by the pleasure that it gives, and I am aware that in the long run, Dante can give more pleasure than Laforgue. But we are not only concerned with pleasure; we are concerned, as historians, with what has made our present. The greatness of any artist depends upon the future; upon what he will do, upon his consequences. It seems to me that our present age has evolved a greatness for the French poets who have been the subject of this lecture. That is shown as much by the work of men who have never heard of them – like D. H. Lawrence – as by the work of men like myself who have been directly stimulated and affected by them.

The poet is not necessarily aware of all the implications of his own work. Indeed, he had better not be directly occupied with general questions at all. He is an accident, and should behave as such. That is to say, in writing poetry, we begin from our own immediate experience. That experience, in itself, has no relation to the experience of society as a whole. All that we are aware of doing, is expressing our own feelings about experience equally private; it simply happens, or it does not happen, that that private experience corresponds to a general state so that it both evokes the private experience, and expresses a public experience of the reader. Significant poetry occurs when there is a triple relation: that of the private experience of the poet to the general conditions, and that of the private experience of the poet and the general conditions to the private experience of the reader. There are two privacies, and one publicity; and there happens to be some point at which they all meet. Jules Laforgue was only occupied with his own private, and not representative emotions; he happened to be able to express them accurately, and it happened that thus expressed they were representative of the emotions of a larger number of persons. Dante, in attempting something on a much grander scale, managed to accomplish it by incorporating into it his private emotions, which, *qua* private, were no more significant than Laforgue's. First, the poet does not aim to be a great poet. Second, he may happen to be what is called a "great poet." Third, there is a valuation of poets which can never be that of the general public, for its criterion is not "greatness" but "contribution."

I do not know whether I have seemed to approach anywhere near to a definition of metaphysical poetry. I began by pointing out that the term has two meanings, both of which must be retained, but which do not quite fit: it means the generation of poets between Donne and Cowley, though opinions may differ about minor individual poets; and also it means a *kind* of poetry not necessarily restricted to that period. I proceeded to the simple assertion that *I* find something in common between these seventeenth[-century] poets, or some of them, and such poets as Dante, Guido Cavalcanti, Guido Guinizelli, Cino of Pistoia, and such poets as Laforgue and Corbière; if you do not agree on this point, then everything I have said is pointless. Note that the difference between the two meanings of "metaphysical poetry" is not a simple difference of extension and intension. You cannot settle the matter so easily as that. To find out what metaphysicality is, in the seventeenth century, we must devote ourselves to the study of Donne. What the seventeenth-century poets had in common is primarily that they lived in the seventeenth century; and second, that they were influenced by Donne. Cowley is a metaphysical in so far as we can consider him in relation to Donne; but if we disregard this relation he is not metaphysical at all. When Cowley exclaims

Now by my Love, the greatest Oath that is,
None loves you half so well as I . . .[24]

we remember that he is a disciple of Donne; but we remember that we were told by Dr. Johnson, that however Cowley "may talk of his own inflammability, and the variety of characters by which his heart was divided, he in reality was in love but once, and then never had resolution to tell his Passion."[25] It is easy to see why Dryden and Johnson deceived themselves about the importance of Cowley. Cowley was in his way a precursor of the style of Dryden, who in his earliest verse is merely a late conceited poet; Dryden and Johnson preferred his poetry for its likeness to their own, though they did not know that this was why they preferred it. Neither Dryden nor Johnson perceived how much a whole generation of poets owed to Donne, poets of very different tendencies: not only George

Herbert and Marvell, but Suckling and Lovelace;[26] not only the more crabbed and obscure, such as Benlowes, but the more courtly and polished of the second generation, such as Rochester and Sedley.[27]

Accordingly we have, I think, to keep the two meanings of "metaphysical" in suspension in our minds: not so difficult as it sounds, for it is what do anyway, and we are not ordinarily concerned with both meanings once. The chief question is, whether you agree that the two other groups, that I have mentioned, Italian and French, are just as metaphysical as the poets in the seventeenth century. If this is agreed by inspection, then what have they in common that can be formulated? It was capital here to distinguish between Dante as a philosophical poet and Dante as a metaphysical poet; and I do not mean that he had a metaphysical period and then a philosophical period; he began rather as a metaphysical, but he is in the *Divine Comedy* both metaphysical and philosophical according to Mr. Santayana's use of the latter word. I put forward that in each case, there was a philosophy and a mysticism in the background: for Dante, the philosophy of Aquinas and the mysticism of the Victorines; for Donne, there was a mixture of mediaeval philosophy – for there was only mediaeval philosophy for him to study – and the visual imaginative method of St. Ignatius – in whose *Exercises* any student of Donne must saturate himself;[28] for Crashaw, there was rather St. Theresa. And for Jules Laforgue the mystical philosophy of Hartmann and Schopenhauer, the same mystical philosophy which is infused into the music dramas of Wagner. Now philosophical poetry is written when a philosophical system is felt as a whole by the poet, when it affects the structure of his poem; when in fact it is believed. But metaphysical poetry can occur either with or without belief. It can occur either in the full possession of belief, or in the disintegration of belief, or in the conscious loss of belief and the search for it. What it makes manifest, and this is its great achievement, its great importance in the history of civilisation, is the intimate relation between our philosophical beliefs and our private feelings and behaviour. That is, indeed, one way of testing philosophical beliefs. The present Countess Russell has observed, in a book characteristically called *The Right to Be Happy*, that "animals we are, and animals we remain, and the path to our regeneration and happiness, if there be such a path, lies through our animal nature."[29] Whatever else is open to Lady Russell to be, it is quite certain that neither she, nor any of her regenerate and happy animal crackers will ever be metaphysical poets. Huysmans' hero of *En Route*, Durtal, observes after his excursion into happiness, "Mon Dieu, que c'est donc bête!"[30] and I cannot believe that D. H. Lawrence, in spite of superficial appearances, would have seen eye to eye with Lady Russell on this point. "The question is," as the late Lord Beaconsfield observed, "is man an ape or an angel?"[31] I think that Lawrence was on the side of the angels; some reformers are[32†] certainly on the side of the Apes.

Now, there is a great deal of good poetry in the world that is metaphysical. Indeed, some of the greatest. You only have metaphysical poetry, as I understand it, when you have a philosophy exerting its influence, not directly through belief, but indirectly through feeling and behaviour, upon the minute particulars of a poet's daily life,[33] his quotidian mind, primarily perhaps his way of love-making but also any activity. There is nothing metaphysical about *Paradise Lost* or about *Faust*; and indeed a very great poet like Milton or Goethe may be much cruder in the way in which he feels his philosophy in daily life, than a smaller poet like Laforgue. Metaphysical poetry is highly civilised and humanity is only highly civilised by fits and starts. Furthermore, the metaphysical poet must be subjective, or at least have a subjective side to him. It is not for nothing that the *Divine Comedy* is related in the first person. A poem like *Samson Agonistes*, however, is subjective in a very different and non-metaphysical way; it is in the way of self-dramatisation, a magnificent megalomania. Such egotism, however great the poetry may be which comes of it, is never metaphysical; the metaphysical poet, though much interested in his own feelings, whether in the way of Dante or in the way of Laforgue or of Donne is interested in them in a cooler, detached way. Milton, in *Samson Agonistes*, expresses his feeling – largely a feeling of pride – towards the world through a dramatic figure; the metaphysical poet deals with his feelings directly, and more as if they were someone else's, only happening to be available to his inspection. One is the attitude of the theatre, the other that of the confessional. A poem like the great ode of Sappho, however acute its observation and statements of the feelings of a lover, is not metaphysical, because there is no definite philosophy behind it;[34] metaphysical poetry does not come early in the history of literature. A great philosophical poem like that of Lucretius is not metaphysical, because for instance the feelings of lovers which he describes are not coloured by philosophy, but are simply such as Countess Russell would have them be in the interest of happiness. And as I have said before, this tincture of human emotions by philosophy which is essential to metaphysical poetry as I conceive it, may or may not be accompanied by belief in that philosophy. In Dante we have the metaphysical development of feeling and also the cosmological belief. In Donne we still have a convinced Christian, but the belief is much narrowed in scope; his theological orthodoxy and his personal piety are corroded by a scepticism, not yet explicit, about philosophical truth in general: he has no accepted cosmology. In Laforgue we have the entertainment of German philosophical systems which are too abstract and skeletonised for the warm adherence of flesh and blood which is full belief, but which are powerful enough to disturb and afflict his personal emotions. I confess that I cannot see much prospect of metaphysical poetry issuing from the liberal or radical political cosmologies of the immediate future. A philosophy which lays under cultivation only the more social emotions and virtues, and which leaves the more private emotions to flourish or languish as weeds, could at best provoke the mental stress and tension of some more tortured Laforgue, but could not produce the harmony of the philosophical, the religious and the personal emotion which we find in Dante.[35]

NOTES

1. TSE delivered his third Turnbull Lecture in Latrobe Hall on 3 Feb, drawing primarily on Clark lecture VIII, with extracts from I, III, IV, and VII.

2. The concluding sentence of Valéry's "Situation de Baudelaire" [The Place of Baudelaire] (1924): "Tandis que Verlaine et Rimbaud ont continue Baudelaire dans l'ordre du sentiment et de la sensation, Mallermé l'a prolongé dans le domaine de la perfection et de la pureté poétique" (*Oeuvres*, I [1957], 613).

3. See 2.755, n.10.

4. See 2.755, n.11.

5. An allusion to Blake's *Jerusalem* (1804-20), chapter 1, plate 27, "To the Jews" ("The fields from Islington to Marybone"), ll. 25-26: "What are those Golden Builders doing / Near mournful ever-weeping Paddington . . . ?" See 2.737, n.41.

6. TSE's translation (and parenthetical insertions) from "Hamlet" in *Moralités légendaires*, included in vol I of the two-volume edition in his library of *Œuvres complètes de Jules Laforgue*, 4th ed. (Paris: Mercure de France, 1909), 69, 72. For original French, see 2.756, n.12.

7. *Trans*: "In short, I was going to treat myself to an 'I love you' when I realized, but not without trouble, that in the first place I was not really in possession of myself"; from "Dimanches" [*Sundays*] (III), ll. 1-3, *Derniers Vers* (1890), in TSE's copy of *Œuvres complètes*, I, 297; trans Michael Collie, Laforgue (Edinburgh: Oliver and Boyd, 1963), 116; see 2.744, n.13.

8. *Trans*: "only believes in his Self in moments of loss"; "Dimanches" (III), line 7.

9. *Trans*: "O Lord, give me the power and the courage / to regard my heart and my body without loathing"; slightly misquoted from "Un Voyage à Cythère, concluding lines: "Seigneur! donnez-moi la force et le courage / De contempler mon coeur et mon corps sans dégoût!"; trans. C. F. MacIntyre, *One Hundred Poems from Les Fleurs du Mal* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1947), 299.

10. *Trans*: "Oh, with what pleasure I'd wring them, this precious body and this tenor heart . . . No, no! That's to suck the flesh of a chosen spirit, to adore incurable organs . . . And it's not her flesh that would be everything for me. And for her I'd be more than a large-hearted man . . . The Spirit and the flesh, the flesh and the spirit – it is the proud spirit of the Garden of Eden to be something of a Man with Woman . . . Come, last of poets, if you're always shut up, you will make yourself ill. See, it's a fine day, everyone's outside. Then go and buy a pennyworth of hellebore. It will give you a little walk." From "Dimanches" (III), stanzas 9, 10, 11 and 13 (299-300); trans. Collie, Laforgue, 116-17; see 2.745, n.16.

11. *Trans*: "The inviolable and frail Young Girls"; "I do not go to church not I! / I'm the High Chancellor of Analysis"; from "Dimanches" (IV), 301-02; trans. Collie, Laforgue, 114.

12. See 2.757, nn.18-19; *Parsifal* (1877-82), Wagner's last work, is a religious festival play.

13. Isidore Lucien Ducasse (1846-70) assumed the pseudonym Comte de Lautréamont upon publication of his *Les Chants de Maldoror* (1869) and *Poésies* (1870). TSE may have discovered him through Remy de Gourmont, who published a new edition of *Les Chants de Maldoror* in 1920. In Sept 1927, he told Harry Crosby that he was familiar with John Rodker's translation of Gourmont's edition for the Casanova Society (1924), and on 26 Oct 1927, he wrote to thank Crosby "for sending me the charming little book [*Préface à Un Livre Future*] on Lautréamont which was entirely unknown to me" (*L2* 781).

14. TSE translates lines 41-51 from Laforgue's prose poem, "Grande complainte de la ville de Paris" [Great Complaint of the City of Paris], written in Aug 1884 and published in his first book, *Les Complaintes* (1885), in *Œuvres complètes*, I, 178. For original French, see 2.745, n.20.

15. See TSE's statement in "Dante" (1929): "It is not particularly the Treaty of Versailles that has separated nation from nation; nationalism was born long before; and the process of disintegration which for our generation culminates in that treaty began soon after Dante's time" (3.702).

16. TSE alludes to the tenth of the twelve poems in *Derniers Vers* (381-82): "Ô géraniums diaphanes, guerroyeurs sortilèges" [Diaphanous geraniums, warrior spells"], which he previously quoted in "The Metaphysical Poets" as a poem that employs "a method curiously similar to that of the 'metaphysical poets,' similar also in its use of obscure words and of simple phrasing" (2.382).

17. In his Page-Barbour Lectures, delivered at the University of Virginia in May 1933, TSE points out "the absence of any moral or social sense" in the relations of Lawrence's men and women before turning directly to *Lady Chatterley's Lover* (1928): "In some respects, he may have progressed: his early belief in Life may have passed over, as a really serious belief in Life must, into a belief in Death. But I cannot see much development in *Lady Chatterley's Lover*" (*ASG* 60).

18. See TSE's previously unrevised statement: "On the one hand he was fascinated by Miss Leah Lee . . . and on the other hand by the Kantian pseudo-Buddhism of Schopenhauer and Hartmann" (2.746).

19. An allusion to Corbière's parodic portrait of Hugo in the twenty-first quatrain of "Une Jeune Qui S'en Va," as printed in TSE's copy of *Les Amours jaunes*, Édition definitive (Paris: Albert Messein, 1912), 57:

> Hugo: l'homme apocalyptique, / L'Homme-ceci-tuera-cela / Garde national épique! /Il ne'en reste qu'un – celui-là"; *trans*: "–Hugo: apocalypse-man, / the Man of This-will-end-that, / . . . an epic national guard! / There's only one Hugo – he's that!"; trans. C. F. MacIntyre, *Selections from Les Amours Jaunes* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1954), 63.

20. TSE translates from Corbière's "La Rapsode foraine et le Pardon de Sainte-Anne" [The Travelling Minstrel and the Pardon of Saint Anne]; *read*: "Contre un tronc"; TSE wrote of this passage in "Modern Tendencies in Poetry" (1920): "the phrase burns itself in like the *cotto aspetto* of Dante's Brunetto Latini" (2.217). He had chosen two preceding lines (113-14) in the poem as the original epigraph for "Sweeney Erect" (*IMH* 356); see 2.747, n.25.

21. "Petit Mort Pour Rire" ["A Little Death to Make One Laugh"] (Corbière's ellipses), one of six poems under the heading "Rondels pour après" [rondels for Afterwsards] in *Les Amours jaunes*, 293; *trans*:

Go quickly, nimble comber of comets!
The wind-blown grass will be your poll;
elf-fires will flash from your hollow sockets,
prisoners in the sorry skulls . . .

the flowers of the grave called Amourettes
will swell your earthy laughter full . . .
and forget-me-nots, flowers of oubliettes . . .

Trans. C. F. MacIntyre, *Selections from Les Amour jaunes*, 195; see 2.747, n.26.

22. Misquoted from Byron's *Don Juan*, Canto the Fourth, stanza v. TSE had memorized the stanza by 16 Nov 1914, when he misquoted several lines in a letter to Conrad Aiken (*L1* 69). He also misquoted the stanza, as above, in the "Introduction" to his Norton Lectures on 4 Nov 1932, where he prefaced the quotation with the observation that "the problem of what a poem 'means' is a good deal more difficult than it at first appears. If a poem of mine entitled *Ash-Wednesday* ever goes into a second edition, I have thought of prefixing to it the lines of Byron from *Don Juan*' (4.590); misquotation corrected in US edition of *UPUC*.

Some have accused me of a strange design
   Against the creed and morals of the land,
And trace it in this poem every line;
   I don't pretend that I quite understand
My own meaning when I would be *very* fine;
   But the fact is that I have nothing plann'd,
Unless it were to be a moment merry,
   A novel word in my vocabulary.

23. Line 6 of Mallarmé's "Le Tombeau d'Edgar Poe" (1876), a line that TSE was to adapt in translation for Part II of "Little Gidding"; "To purify the dialect of the tribe" (*CPP* 194). He earlier quoted the line in "Note sur Mallarmé et Poe" (1926) (2.846-47).

24. "My Dyet," from *The Mistress*; see 2.727, n.10.

25. Johnson, "Life of Cowley" (*Lives* 3).

26. In "The Minor Metaphysicals" (1930), TSE placed Suckling and Lovelace in the Donne tradition: "In an age of rich poetic accomplishment we may expect to find a swarm of minor poets each of whom is the author of one or two noteworthy pieces of verse. Donne invented an idiom, a language which less original men could learn and talk . . . Herbert, Crashaw, Vaughan

and Marvell, all made valuable variations on this idiom. Then come a third and a fourth class of poets: . . . I recommend . . . Carew, Suckling, Lovelace" (4.109).

27. TSE discusses Donne's influence on Benlowes and Rochester at the end of his fourth Clark lecture (2.682-83), and again, including Sedley, in "The Minor Metaphysicals" (4.109).

28. TSE had written of the importance of St. Ignatius to Donne in "Thinking in Verse" (1930): "Now, if you read and study the *Spiritual Exercises*, you will find a stock of images which reminds you, and by no mere coincidence, of Donne . . . St. Ignatius works on the imagination, to make us realise the Passion as he realised it . . . And we shall find the visual imagery of St. Ignatius in Donne, whose childhood was passed under Jesuit influence" (4.51).

29. A quotation from Chapter VI, "Modern Civilization," in Countess Russell's *The Right to Be Happy* (London: George Routledge & Sons, 1927), 241. TSE had visited the Russells at their Chelsea flat; she knew of TSE's strong reaction to the quoted sentence and wrote in *The Tamarisk Tree* (London: Elek/Pemberton, 1975) that the remark had "shocked T. S. Eliot, who evidently failed to understand what the book was about. Ecologists of today would find themselves in sympathy with many of my sentiments: I speak of the 'quality' as opposed to the 'quantity' in life; I suggest that a group of men and women who seek and find the 'right road to conquering ourselves and our environments' could, by their speech and action, show that 'this way of life can be practised by all and is capable of being the foundation of a society'" (194).

Dora Black Russell, Countess Russell (1894-1986), feminist, social activist and author, married Lord Russell in 1921 as his second wife; their marriage was dissolved in 1935.

30. *Trans*: "My God, how stupid the business is!"; trans. Alfred Allinson, *Down There* (London: Fortune Press, 1930), 33. Durtal, the protagonist of four novels by Huysmans, mutters this exclamation to himself not in *En Route* (1895) but in *Là-Bas* (1891); see 2.660.

31. Benjamin Disraeli, then leader of the Tory Opposition, asked this famous question in "Church Policy" (1864), his celebrated speech at the Oxford Diocesan Conference in defense of the Church Establishment: "What is the question which is now placed before society with a glib assurance which to me is most astonishing? The question is this – is a man an ape or an angel? My lord, *I am on the side of the angels*. I repudiate with indignation and abhorrence these new fangled theories." See Francis Hitchman, *The Public Life of the Earl of Beaconsfield* (London: Sampson Low, 1884), 359. In 1876, during his second term of office as Prime Minister, Disraeli was raised to the peerage, taking a name from his first novel (*Vivian Grey*, 1826) to become the 1st Earl of Beaconsfield.

32†. Crossed out: "Lady Russell is"

33. An allusion to Blake's *Jerusalem*. "He who would do good to another must do it in Minute Particulars: / General Good is the plea of the scoundrel, hypocrite & flatterer, / For Art & Science cannot exist but in minutely organized Particulars" (Plate 55, ll. 60-62; *Blake: Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes [Oxford: Oxford UP, 1985], 672). TSE earlier quoted these lines in "Blake" (1920) as an example of the "formlessness" in Blake's marriage of poetry and philosophy (2.189).

34. Sappho's "Ode to Anactoria" (ca. 600 BC); see 2.614-15.

35. The Baltimore *Sun* reported TSE's final lecture on 4 Feb 1933, headlined "Eliot Credits Laforgue / With Inspiring His Work": "Had it not been for Jules Laforgue, T. S. Eliot said yesterday that his own work would not have been written . . . Laforgue, finding his way out of a philosophy not satisfactory to himself, according to Mr. Eliot, pointed the path out for him" (18).

TURNBULL LECTURES TEXTUAL NOTE

1. Location: Harvard University, Houghton Library (MS Am 1261), acquired at Sotheby's auction on 13 Oct 1942, lot 277 in sale catalog, unbound in a lettered folder; typed, with holograph emendations, on 47 sheets of "Hammermill Bond / Made in USA" (21.7 × 28.0 cm), with the exception of the last page (15) of lecture III, which was typed on the verso, upside-down, of TSE's personal Eliot House stationery (also Hammermill Bond, 21.7 × 28.0 cm); pencil inscription in TSE's hand on first page of Lecture I: "F. V. M. [i.e., F. V. Morley] Definitely not for publication but for your amusement." TSE's signed holograph description on cover page: "'The Varieties of Metaphysical Poetry' /Three lectures delivered / at Johns Hopkins University / Baltimore, U.S.A. / (The Turnbull Lectures) in January 1933/ T. S. Eliot."

The Turnbull Lectures were first edited and published posthumously in *VMP* (1993), which contains a discussion of the historical context (231–44) and a list of textual emendations (304–07). That text has been re-edited in this critical edition in part to preserve the oral character of the unpublished and unrevised typescript: TSE's typed underlinings for emphasis in delivery have been preserved as such. Individual foreign words and phrases (*jeu de mots*) have been italicized; quotations of foreign sentences and lines of poetry, and foreign passages in set-off quotations, are kept in roman. The titles of books, plays, and long poems, often typed without punctuation, have been italicized. Minor mistranscriptions of poetic texts have been corrected to the editions identified and used by TSE. Misquotations from memory have been preserved in the text and corrected in the notes.

Lecture Notes for English 26: English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day

TSE taught English 26: Contemporary English Literature, with the assistance of Professor Theodore Spencer, on Tuesdays and Thursdays during the spring semester, beginning on 7 Feb 1933 and concluding on 4 May, with a final exam on 9 June. Before returning to England, he gave the notes to Spencer, who eventually placed them in Eliot House with the following note: "These lectures were delivered by T. S. Eliot in the spring of 1933 when he was staying in Eliot House . . . The course was given at Harvard in Sever 6, and . . . was limited to 20 selected students. Mr. Eliot gave the lecture notes to me when he left in June, 1933, 'having no further use for them,' and they are now presented by me to the Eliot House Library. Theodore Spencer / April, 1936." When librarian J. McG. Bottkol wrote to ask about access and quotation, TSE replied on 11 May 1936: "I think it would be better . . . if permission to transcribe them, quote from them, or use them in any way were only given after obtaining my consent in each case. After all, I don't in the least remember what is in those notes, and they may require a good deal of interpretation." A student in the course, C. L. Sulzberger, later recalled: "We were illumined by his brilliant mind. . . . Timid and withdrawn as Eliot was in class, he had a talent for banging the piano and singing a huge number of limericks, some of which I suspect he had written himself. I liked him despite the fact that he gave me a poor mark on my term paper. Its subject was 'The Undergraduate Poetry of T. S. Eliot.'" *A Long Row of Candles: Memoirs and Diaries 1934-1954* (NY: Macmillan, 1969), 4. See textual note.

ENGLISH 26. 1

Warning about my own limitations. Ignorance and Prejudice – reasons for.

Do not intend to supply any information that can be got out of books. Shall only give information from personal knowledge which cannot be got from books; and for the rest a guide towards private reading and original thinking. Seminar spirit – free discussion.

Why study contemporary literature at all? is the first question. Obviously cannot be studied by the same methods as literature of a past period. No values are settled, nor is the general historical import of anything clear. Student must rely very much upon his own sensibility and judgment and decide what is worth while for him. Should not attempt to inform himself comprehensively by first-hand knowledge of every writer with a reputation. I assume that everyone here has some notion of what he is interested in, and wishes to concentrate rather than disperse.

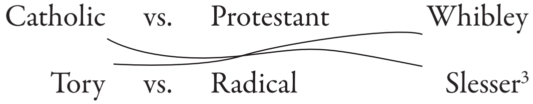
Study of contemporary literature is learning to know what we want to read and why. Should fit in with study of past literature and history – the prime motive for studying the past is that without studying it we cannot understand the present; and we cannot understand the past except by seeing it in relation to the present. Find out first what you can enjoy reading. After you have enjoyed it as literature, you can sociologise and psychologise about it as much as you like – but the useless analysis of literature is made by those who have not enjoyed it first. Unless you appreciate it as literature you have no data.

BACKGROUND IN NINETEENTH CENTURY (What one should know.)

Poetry. Browning the only poet to devise a way of speech which might be useful for others. The Pre-Raphaelites (Swinburne – Rossetti) affected the 90s. Browning's lesson is use of non-poetic material – in re-asserting relation of poetry to speech.[1] Gradual influence of French poetry. The writers of the 90s used it wrongly.

The Novel. Here again foreign influence important. Two great Victorians – Meredith and Hardy – survive into our period. Must be regarded as survivors because they have little influence upon present. Conrad and James another literary generation. The standard for the novel is not set by the great Victorians, but by French and Russian. Stendhal and Flaubert. (Maupassant, Huysmans, Zola). Compare Battle of Waterloo in Vanity Fair with ditto in Chartreuse de Parme. Russian influence. Turgenev on Henry James (read Fathers and Sons, Sportsman's Sketches). War and Peace. Brothers Karamazov. Huysmans.

General Ideas. Newman vs. Arnold – Pater. John Stuart Mill – the change of Victorian individualism into Fabian socialism. Rationalism: Sir Leslie Stephen. Spencer, Huxley. Toryism: Disraeli, Sir Henry Maine (Popular Government)[2] develops into Imperialism (Henley, Kipling). Imperialism a transient mood. But the antitheses



Catholic vs. Protestant Whibley

Tory vs. Radical Slesser[3]

Halifax: Whig. Catholic.
Beauchamp: Liberal Catholic
Lloyd: Catholic: Tory.[4]

must always be remembered. (Not necessarily the same). Regionalism a by-product of Imperialism. (Irish, Scottish, Welsh)

further antitheses:

Oxford v. Cambridge
Idealism (Bradley, Bosanquet, Joachim).
Realism (Cook Wilson, Prichard)[5]
Russell; Moore, Broad
Hoskyns, Spens, etc -[6] Richards
Ogden
Empson[7]

The 90s not all of a piece. All sorts of men who don't fit into a school. Two chief types: the aesthete and the political. Wilde and Henley.

The idea of Decadence. Anatole.[8] Derivation of Pater from Arnold. The Renaissance. Fading out of social enthusiasms. Position of Wilde. Essentially theatrical, a politician gone wrong. Reasons for regarding him as a chef d'école. Des Esseintes.

Little real French influence at this period. Cf. Symons' own verse. Dowson, Johnson, Davidson. (Converts = Johnson and Beardsley. Francis Thompson.)

Partly post-pre Raphaelite. But also an approach to speech, to the order of prose.

1896 – Wilde Trial.

Defects of last lecture. Difficult period to treat except summarily. Its excesses led to an outburst of Georgian poetry. Its novelists hardly to be treated except individually.

Great exception Kipling. Not of 90s group so to speak, but of Henley group. In what way Conrad and Henry James later than Kipling. Kipling the Hemingway of his generation.[9]

Difference between early work (dates) and later. Earlier what made importance. Pre Boer War.

Parallel with Wells.

(1) ~~Not distinguished origin~~ Certain Vulgarity. Illustration: theme of Vulgar man vs. vulgar genius. Poe.
(2) Both great at "scientific" fiction.

(3) " " short story writers.
(4) Both journalists
(what is meant by journalist).
Wrote of the surface of things.
(5) but with great imagination.

Contrast
Kipling imperialist
Wells Fabian

The imperialist mind in literature. Kipling not exactly an Englishman nor a colonial. If the Empire had not existed he would have had to invent it. British soil deck of a P & O liner. "Dobrée's essay."[10]

His Poetry
The Indian stories (including Kim).
The Light that Failed
Other stories.
Contrast Reingelder with Conrad.[11]

His poetry, a derivation from Swinburne and the Bible. Simplified rhythms. It is the Swinburne emotion boiled down (hardboiled down) for the newspaper.

"L'Envoi," p. 296.
"The Feet of the Young Men," p. 32

There is a genius in this metric. You can't invent rhythms and verse forms like that, though anyone can imitate. Danny Deever. The tunes you whistle.

The sentiments always just right. The slickness of popular appeal.

The sentiments –
The British soldier. Difference 1914 made to this concept – but the army not a paradise, the solider no saint. Rough stuff. ~~He gave the same thrill to old ladies as his modern peer Hemingway (also a great~~ journalist).
The Briton should rule the world. (a) He does it very badly, but better than anyone else would. But
Democracy of the heart – Sisters under the skin. East and West. Colonel and Private. (Everyone above rank of Colonel negligible).

Homesickness for England and flight from England.
"The Broken Men"[12] p. 31.
Observe topicality. Mr. Dooley on Kipling.[13]

India. Surprising range and versatility. Kipling has only to think of a dramatic subject to be provided with the data – even if incorrect.
"The Man Who Was" (patriotic)
"The Man Who Would Be King" (imperial privates)
"The End of the Passage" (spooky)
"To be Filed for Reference" }
"Love o' Women" } tragedy
Kim – not a novel – Indian Story.
The Light that Failed.

Kipling everywhere a reporter. Not the true but the effective. Perhaps greatest of the type since Defoe. Characteristics of Vulgarity: Knowingness: (Conrad said to Hugh Clifford –).[14] "Trick Work" Light that Failed.[15] But genius. Consequences: Bull Dog Drummond.[16] You would expect to find his consequences lower rather than higher up.

Three classes in England: – a b and c
Upper middle
Middle middle
Lower middle

Kipling spokesman for Class b for the 90s. We must study by-products of literature as well as literature – we all read them anyway.

Also a wholesome gospel (Dobrée). The notion of heroism
Mulvaney
Ortheris
Learoyd[17]

"Bertran and Bimi"[18] – Conrad.

LECTURE IV [KIPLING, BELLOC, CHESTERTON, SHAW, WELLS]

The generation just before mine included a type of which nearest in ours is Wyndham Lewis – but he would not like me to say so.

Kipling Belloc Chesterton Shaw Wells	Journalists characterised by great versatility, productiveness, and interest in a variety of matters.

Enumerate activities of each.

Superficiality – but in a good sense – in what way Chesterton superficial. (Whibley).

Saintsbury [W. P.] Ker

Antithesis of Fabian – Rationalist
Catholic – Distributist

Fabian Essays published in 1889.[19]

Read Passage from Shaw (Fabian Essays)
" " " Chesterton p. 145[20]

Lord Olivier
Chesterton p. 7.[21]

Wilde group reacted against. Victorian association of art with social causes and moral teaching healthy. But at same time growing up groups of men who were using art for social causes – Fabian – Distributist
Rationalist – Catholic.

Joyce, and more explicitly Lawrence, a reaction against all this. Absence of moral interest in Fabians. Partly perhaps because I am not given the kind of imagination of Wells or Chesterton, though I admire it, I prefer to keep things in their places.

Lawrence's opinions.

Sidney Webb the intellectual force. I cannot expound Fabianism to you. But can call attention to its influence, now declining.

Through Universities
teaching body

extension lecturing
detective story – Cole's.[22]

Shaw's novels. Difficult to imagine how revolutionary they seemed then. Or the Plays Unpleasant.[23]

And for some years Fabianism seemed the only new kind of thought to which young men could attach themselves.

Since then, Liberalism is dead and The "Conservative" party is now largely composed of ex-Liberals, the Labour party of ex-Radicals. Chesterton has some appeal to the Young Conservative or Tory mind.

Fabianism stood for some good things. It meant, especially as preached by Shaw, emancipation of ideas. Liberalism, in politics, as in religion, is a self-destructive force.

It was natural that H. G. Wells should be Fabian. Not however a real Fabian. Wells sham Fabian – Kipling sham Tory. His origins. Class jealousy as illustrated in novels. Not servant of ideas. Will to Power. Some scientific training. Scientific imagination. But imagination not only scientific.

"The Country of the Blind"
"The Door in the Wall"] Generalisation. Jerusalem Jerusalem[24]
Anatole France "Maman" (dying)[25]

Notice the reportage – the giving of an illusion – the other kind of imagination differently occupied. The East in Youth not described for its own sake, but suggested by smell.

The novels. Coarseness of fibre. The things he wants are never the best things, though often good things.

His idolisation of knowledge – information. And his social ideals, never high, seem to deteriorate. Big business. No passion for ideas, like Shaw, or principles. The gospel of mechanical progress. A great imagination with no reasoning capacity. Also class-conscious in the wrong way.

"Invention" Insistence upon the two kinds of imagination.[26] But this is more obvious with these men than before – Dickens had some of both. (Dostoevski is unplaceable. So are Dostoevski and Tolstoi). What I call, with no disrespect, but merely as a genre, "journalism," reaches its peak in our time.

Interesting that Shaw and James lived in the same time.

LECTURE V [SHAW AND CHESTERTON]

~~Shaw is of course quite unique~~. Fabianism a godsend to him also. For all his life he has been teaching people that the only way to treat ideas with respect is not to treat any one idea with too much respect.

Shaw and Chesterton – Why comparable. The use of paradox. Shaw not the visual imagination. (Kipling, Wells). The imaginative treatment of ideas. Method of Shaw and Chesterton is of course a formula. But one which no one else can use as well.

Plays can't make same effect as 25 years ago. How one went to a Shaw play. Shaw really seemed a Revolutionist then; society here takes him much as Ann took Tanner.[27]

See Man and Superman, p. 8.

So afraid of getting lost that he always takes his sense of humour about. One tires of it.

People wondered whether serious or not. But if serious, then took it in wrong way. Shaw value has nothing to [do] with direct action – does not depend on what he believes at any moment or not.

Fabianism and every other belief is something he makes use of. Not a possible man in Russia. Real revolutionist in sense that whatever people believe he wants them to see its falsity.

This not scepticism cf. Anatole France. Useful function.

His limitation: assumption that the truth is what people don't believe. This is true so far as it goes, but not whole truth. Realism to him meant showing the other side. Took up Butler, ~~His modern young woman~~ Ibsen, Nietzsche[28] – why these congenial.

This attitude – always against the present belief – accounts for some surprises. Compare his young women Ann, Fanny, and the more recent Ellie.[29]

Ann p. 53.	p. 56-57. Hypocrisy
Ellie p. 20.	p. 76. disillusioned
	p. 79. further disillusionment

Likes to reverse rôles – and make the simpleton unexpectedly say clever things.

In Saint Joan, [Peter] Cauchon etc.
In The Apple Cart, the King.

This is not pure fooling – though much pure absurdity to help out. Nor is it devotion to ideas.

His realism is the theatrically effective.
Much of it just caricature.

He has come to drop his early enthusiasms – Life Force etc. – but still delights in ideas.

The limitations of a man who always sees the other side.

But plays violate all laws except brilliant prose. Best prose since Congreve. But not so fine as Congreve.

v. Irish rationalist
v. English Catholic.

Chesterton similar mind except that that it had essential tendency to Belief. Equally attack on Victorian England. Attacked partly by defending what it thought it admired. His Dickens.[30] Liberalism (Matthew Arnold of use to him.) Like Shaw not inventor of ideas – but exponent. Style differs e.g.

Chesterton p. 129

"There is more simplicity in the man who eats caviar on impulse than in the man who eats grape-nuts on principle."[31] Uses the detailed metaphor a great deal. Men with gift for popular exposition are versatile. Uses every form. His detective stories. Sometimes unfair in methods, sometimes illogical and apt to be carried away by his ability to find effective and amusing illustrations.[32] Must, like Shaw, surprise at all costs. But honest and fair minded in feeling.

On Shaw:
Chesterton,[33] p. 134. p. 223

His social views
Distributism. Village community but hates Simple Lifers
Outline of Sanity,[34] p. 171. p. 195. Criticism of Machinery (Ruskin, Penty)[35]
Agriculture
Anti-Imperialist, Tory

Like Shaw he is carried away by his own wit – he talks about things he cares about, but he also cares for his way of talking.

Most perfect in the Short Essay.
("Defence of Rash Vows").[36]
Concrete imagination in fiction. Fantasy his natural element.
The Man who was Thursday[37]
Chesterton p. 159-161.

LECTURE VI [THOMAS HARDY]

Thomas Hardy. --------- ~~Fernandez on Fiction~~.[38]

Where does he belong?

What is his greatest novel (to me) published 1886 The Mayor of Casterbridge?[39]

Definitely of an earlier generation than Conrad and James. Not a realist as they under French influence were. Yet far more like a realist than the pure Victorian novelists. Dickens and Thackeray were in the 18th Century tradition, primarily narrative. Balzac. The dramatic points are given for their own sake – sc. Vanity Fair, Henry Esmond, Merdle-Krook, Little Dorrit.[40] George Eliot also, but she more interested in the moral struggle (v. Fernandez). Hardy more in common with Wuthering Heights (almost feminine). He is not interested in people's minds but in their emotions; therefore only in rather simple emotions. Thomas Hardy interested in character but not personality. The persons exist in order to express a state of emotion. Therefore landscape counts very much. (Egdon Heath – Return of the Native). The simple emotion not necessarily the conventional emotion. Troy and Bathsheba at the Coffin (Far from the Madding Crowd). Unreality of his people in relation to this. Not because he chooses country life that his people are like this, but vice versa. They exist as a part of the landscape except when swept by emotion. Wordsworth – Lakes –

Not necessarily true to life. His peasants. No peculiar sympathy with lower class, except through landscape.

In Hardy the so-called "pessimistic philosophy" is exaggerated. Hardy is not expressing a theory about life, but a feeling about it. It is assumed that the present life is all that there is. But his gloom does not come through his philosophy, but the other way about.

The high dramatic moments are more or less rigged.
Henchard and the Effigy. (Casterbridge)

"Novels of Character and Environment." Environment more important than character.

Tess – Jude – Casterbridge.[41]

What Tess and Jude meant at the time. Story of Tess. Weakness of interest in character. Protest against double standard? But morality somehow out of date. Faults of Jude. The dice are loaded.

Not real people, but people are real in their most intense moments. Jude's wife the most real. Pig sticking scene. It is all delivered from his own feelings, which must have been of some violence. Moral. Casterbridge p. 385

Casterbridge. Best constructed and most moving.

To get the scheme of Hardy's emotional life, without the Wessex trimmings, read Life's Little Ironies and A Group of Noble Dames.

Plan of latter and
"Barbara of House of Grebe," p. 55.
"Lady Mottisfant," p. 115.
"Squire Petrick's Lady," p. 153.

Now this is not realism at all. It is "romances and fantasies" indeed. I see in it a savage desire to revenge himself on life in some way, almost sadistic. But how well done and what an imagination to think of the plots! Suits his very formal style of writing better than modern stories, in which writing often bad. Far from the Madding Crowd. Beginning: Oak's watch[42]

Intensity of the feeling, such as it is, what atones for every defect. He is a terrific egoist, able to impose his feelings upon even a heath. But what Hardy feels is in the end very unsatisfactory. Cesspool of unsatisfied desires.

We can learn a great deal from a writer whose account of reality we finally reject.

CONRAD AND JAMES I

Sharp distinction from the journalists and also from Hardy. What they have in common.

(1) Both foreigners – what that means – James dealt with the kind of society of which he was a member. Conrad with the Briton in

isolation – i.e. MacWhirr in Typhoon. Neither really attempted English life. Conrad spoke with foreign accent.

(2) Both had intense exalted view of novelist's work. They reflected on what the novelist should do, as no previous English novelist had done.

(3) Both write consciously for a small number. Both wrote, not like Hardy, as a kind of way of imposing their temperaments on the world, but using themselves in the service of art.

(4) Their masters much the same. Turgenev and Flaubert. This is not art for art's sake. The novel is, for the reader, an extension of life. Our private experience is not only narrow, but we are absorbed by practical activities and biased by desires. The novelist is to give us an expanded experience, and his "art" of selection, observation, style and mood is devoted to this end. We are, with this kind of story, to draw our own conclusions, if any. "The Lady with the Dog."[43] What conclusion do we draw – we have had an experience, which has affected us like our own joy and suffering. Conrad on Maupassant. p. 29 ff. Freedom from dogma. p. 7 ff.[44]

Similarly, it is impossible to get the most out of James without taking seriously his devotion to his art. See Lubbock's preface to his letters.[45] With Hardy we feel that his private emotions exist first and crave an expression. But Conrad's and James's are most real, and most private, in the expression. Nobody has ever found the writing of fiction more exciting than did James. A whole group of stories which give the clue to his feeling –

"The Figure in the Carpet"
"The Death of the Lion"
"The Real Right Thing"
"The Lesson of the Master"

and the plans given in the two unfinished novels. The Sense of the Past and The Ivory Tower.[46]

Conrad not a teller of tales. Plot often extremely involved. In the Pole, perhaps, the man of action and the man of reflection not different people. Pilsudski, p. 264, 355-6.[47] He did not go to the East or to the Congo in order to write about them. The Romance of his East is not that of Kipling. On the contrary, it is often the story of the deterioration, or the failure of the White man – Almayers Folly (compared with To be Filed for Reference).

Lord Jim – cf. "The Man Who Would Be King." When there is victory, as in Typhoon or The Shadow Line, it is a very decisive victory. He is not, like Hardy, engaged with very simple emotions, such as sexual passion, and pride. He is concerned with a total complex situation in which the simple emotions are only elements. Complexity of Typhoon. The simple emotions are taken for granted. Contrast Jack London.[48]

Youth p. 37 p. 40
Analyse Heart of Darkness, p. 149
The Horror: cf. James

CONRAD AND JAMES II

Ordinary accusations against James:

1/. Difficulty of style. Dictation (Bosanquet).[49] Great fascination of – Effect of on his critics – Van Wyck Brooks.[50] Great intensity. Your awareness of his passion, almost priesthood.
2/. Snobbishness – unfounded. His England pre-war. Element of illusion – "The Great Good Place" – letters to Eddie Marsh about Dear Rupert – willed illusion of so perceptive a man – essential vulgarity and cheapness of Dear Rupert[51] – cf. conversation with Jim Barnes[52] "My Odyssey" – possible disillusionment in The Sense of the Past – horribleness of English vulgarity – strands of illusion and disillusion.
3/. Triviality of subject matter. The American in Europe. Anathema to such people as Waldo Frank and to other Americans, most of whom, James might have remarked, "arrived in America after I left."[53] James often appears to have a very naif belief in Europe. Yet, as in The American, he can be just as perceptive and severe about Europe as about America. Justice of The Europeans. But fundamentally he is concerned with the most serious matters. (Jean de Menasce)[54]

James real progenitor is Hawthorne. You cannot understand him without Hawthorne.[55] The essential thing their indifference to religious dogma at the same time as their exceptional awareness of spiritual reality. Judge Pyncheon. Profound sensitiveness to Good and Evil. Vulgarity as a form of Evil.

Shall not attempt to discuss his greater long novels.

Daisy Miller
The Europeans
The American
The Ambassadors
The Wings of the Dove
The Spoils of Poynton
The Sense of the Past

I suggest that you think of James with Hawthorne (and read his monograph on Hawthorne – Hawthorne and Andrew Eliot as witch hangers).[56] The spookiness of his spook stories not something apart – you find it in The Sense of the Past – you must keep it in mind in reading everything he wrote.

A Round of Visits: sense of the spookiness of the power of money in American life. James one of the most ironic – i.e. one of the most civilised of writers – more ironic than Anatole France.

What Maisie Knew
p. 276 – The Turn of the Screw Children
"The Altar of the Dead" not liturgically correct, but –
"The Friends of the Friends"[57] p. 320
  cf. Heart of Darkness
"The Jolly Corner"

James now not appreciated by either English or Americans.
The last word on James:
  "The Horror, the Horror."

CONRAD AND JAMES. III.

Return to Conrad and James as much more important than nearly all of the subsequent writers.

Two of James': Aspern Papers; and Turn of the Screw in relation to Heart of Darkness.

Story of Aspern Papers. But James and Conrad much more than story tellers. – the story is only the minimum requirement – essential of a story to maintain our expectation of something to happen. Beauty of Aspern Papers in that the centre of interest always fluctuating as the tale goes on.

Venice, absolutely, has to be the centre. Cf. "The Assignation"[58] – that romantic, this post-romantic.

1. Relation of narrator with poet.
2. with Juliana.
3. Juliana with poet.
4. Juliana and niece Tina.
5. narrator with Tina.

Mistake to think that Preface tells everything.
Authors *can't* tell much.
Always be suspicious of confessional authors.
What matters does he deal with: localisation of Aspern and his American birth.

My problem in Bleistein. Similar problem although not superficially. To get Venice not too directly – every reference to Venice should call up something else as well and vice versa. To make a place real not descriptively but by something happening there. Not "Toccata of Galuppi's": the epigraph perhaps illicit.[59]

Complete fitness of place and action.
First, the particular problem stated – interest aroused. Anticipations – p. 7. p. 11. p. 13
The house p. 8.

Delays essential to James and Conrad. The price – the garden – the exact nature of Miss Bordereau's cupidity – which is a foil to his cupidity for the papers. (p. 25)

Miss Bordereau – *inimical description* p. 21 p. 32
Character of Juliana. p. 43
Tina.
Small touches – p. 57 p. 65
p. 70 after wondering all the time whether there really *are* any Aspern Papers.
p. 72 Tina begins to appear.
Will Miss Bordereau destroy the papers?
Beating about the bush. p. 80.
The miniature. p. 83

Pp. 90-104 to describe his attempt on the secretary. Eyes not described – that is not a failure, except in the nature of language – what is important is not to describe the indescribable, but to note its effect.

p. 104. Humiliation theme.
Venice in the servant – p. 106-107
The crisis on p. 117.

The great affair not to relate, but to make the reader supply, cooperate. Preface to Turn of the Screw. How to suggest Evil.

This not weakness. I speak of Turn of the Screw and Heart of Darkness together because both attempt to present Evil. Only Hawthorne and Dostoevski comparable. Essential moral preoccupation, Evil is rare, bad is common. Evil cannot even be perceived but by a very few. The perception of life as on several planes at once, noticeable in Chapman and Dostoevski. Different layers of meaning – shifting emphases.[60] An Adventure.

James's notion of ghosts – of horror by suggestion. v. Preface. Real Evil is much more than an Act, hence the relevance of Joyce's and Conrad's method. Real Evil is to Bad just as Saintliness and Heroism to Decent Behaviour. Nothing frightful in Kurtz participating in native rites – or in Miles using vile language to schoolboys.

Story of Turn of the Screw. Good visible ghosts – not De la Mare shivers.

As in Kurtz his genius and altruistic ambitions are stressed, so the loveliness of Miles and Flora. Ambiguity of end. Effect of cross-currents – Douglas in love with the Governess, the Governess in love with her employer. Keeping different planes intersecting. Intersection of planes of reality has been problem of fiction ever since Bleak House and Armadale. Becomes final with Joyce.[61]

Importance of Conrad and James is consciously on several levels – that of Kipling or Wells on one only. These are writers to whom it is worth while completely to succumb for a time. No author final enough to succumb too completely. Shakespeare and Dante complement each other.

Prose more developed than verse during this period. Modern versifiers (Pound and self) more nourished on prose than verse. Verse only beginning to reprendre son bien.[62]

W. B. YEATS. I.

In this course, must select significant figures rigorously. Why choose Yeats?

Dealt with Shaw, Wells, Chesterton because they expound, on a popular level, ideas which are on the level on which the most of us think. We read them, not to get ideas, but to know where we got those we have. With Hardy as a somewhat anomalous and psychopathetic case between the old and the new novel. With Conrad and James as the new novel. They were the most important makers of literature in their day. Even for poetry, there is much to be learnt from the best novelists – you have to learn to write, in general, not merely to write poetry – there are fundamental things in writing. I have ignored men of some importance. Francis Thompson. The poets of the Nineties (Johnson – Dowson – Davidson) – I have already made the only point I care to make: you can read them for yourselves. From the late 90s to what I call the Anglo-American movement, everything can be dealt with in relation to Yeats. His variety of interest, his resourcefulness and development.

Three phases:
a/ The Nineties.
b./ The Irish Movement.
c./ The post-Pound period.

Yeats slow to develop – a sign of magnitude. Not sure how much influence he has had. This influence, so far as English and American poetry is concerned, begins in the third period. His early impression on me – merely part of the futility of the 90s. Richards somewhat underrates him, at least for my present purposes, in classing him with De la Mare.[63] Shall deal with Georgian poetry in second period. Yeats remarkable life and personality. Born 1865, but I regard him as my contemporary.

His autobiographical writings.[64] Quality of his prose. Interest in (1) Irish nationalism (2) the occult, from the start.

The Occult. p. 110.
Early days in London – father friend of pre-Raphaelite painters.
Young Ireland p. 126
His religious nature p. 142
Maud Gonne p. 151
Early days in London. Henley. Wilde. Johnson
Innisfree in London. p. 189.
Untermeyer p. 292.

Passion for Blake p. 199
Madame Blavatsky. p. 214
The Tragic Generation p. 372

~~The Occult. p. 33~~
~~Symbolism p. 188 is very deliberate p. 190. 194. 198~~
~~Folk literature p. 221~~

W. B. YEATS II

Interest in Magic. p. 33.[65]

Recurrent Images. p. 54 ff. p. 96, The Great Memory. Shelley's symbols p. 99. (Harry Crosby – D. H. Lawrence). Blake p. 139. Significant reference to Pound p. 178. The purpose of rhythm. p. 195. Poetic form 201.

Dangers of monotony, of minor key, in this theory – too hypnotic? The willed cultivation of imagery does not always select significant imagery. Early Poems p. 263.[66]

The dream imagery related to that of Rossetti and William Morris. Imagery probably springs from different levels.

> Recurrences probably unconscious (hair)
> " " conscious (dream)
> Deliberate use of image from particular dream.
> The image which springs new in the composition of a poem.

Question how far images can be cultivated. e.g. Pound's "Heather," p. 89.

Something of the lovephiltre element in it. Why it is cultivated.

~~Yeats' great progress rather in diction and cadence~~

But sometimes very successful.

"The Cat and the Moon." Selected poems.[67] p. 291. See Yeats's theory about the relation of the moon to the change in the human spirit. But I doubt whether we worry about that.

Fergus. Empson p. 238. Empson's analysis.[68]

Yet the great progress is in clarity and simplicity, in fineness of metric. Compare.

"The White Birds" (Early Poems p. 119) which might be any minor poet of his time.

"To Ireland in the Coming Times" p.135[69]
with the "Upon a Dying Lady" sequence [287-90]
or "Men Improve with Years" p. 276 or
"The Collar-bone of a Hare." [277]

No development over early poems except in the expression, and no great use of imagery. At his best when most human, as in "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory" (Selected Poems p. 270).

The Tower.[70]

Odd relation of his poetry to his practical activities – first Irish theatre and then practical politics. Nobility in his deliberate attempts.

THE IRISH THEATRE

The theatre did something for Ireland and Ireland did something for the theatre. Natural that a small Nationalist movement should aim at the theatre. Chiefly, the work of Yeats, but Yeats' work in drama more important than Irish Theatre. Whole life of theatre in my time has been in Dublin.

Why nationalism favourable to theatre and Imperialism unfavourable. Nationalism in England even – Chesterton, Lawrence. Athens. Rome – Seneca. London – Cavalcade.[71]

Theatre and regionalism go together. Theatre must be local. Spirit of theatre religious. Cornford.[72] Yeats from beginning against commercial theatre – Stars, internationalism, managers etc. Real actor essentially humble: spirit of modern actor essentially pride. Yeats involved in all the healthy dramatic movements of our time.

Yeats' essay on "The Theatre" p. 203.

Development in his view of the theatre. At first, confused with Nationalism. Three stages in Irish theatre. 1. Lady Gregory. 2. Synge. 3. Yeats, Four plays for Dancers.

Lady Gregory a simple skilful playwright. The comic Irishman.

The Rising of the Moon. Plot. How the rebel raises fear in the Sergeant – p. 85.[73] Sentiment. Lady Gregory remains in the comic Irish tradition and nationalism.

Synge. Essays p. 369.[74] Excessive care for language. But always too local, still with the comic Irish touch. Synge created by Yeats. Yeats gives best account of Synge. In plays of Synge we feel certain exploitation of Ireland, rather than central interest in the drama –

The Playboy of the Western World. Plot. Diction. Important when we come to Joyce. Much more restricted than English. p. 218. p. 222 (Work in Progress. Anna Livia).[75] Love Scene p. 270.[76] Green Pastures Quaintness.

Synge just misses universality.

Yeats begins by being dramatic in order to be Irish. Ends in drama in which Irishness is subordinate. Incidentally, his notes on Irish theatre of great interest. Show Yeats fighting in a public role. Fought for tolerance, civilisation, throughout. (A few years ago, public protest, only published in Criterion against Irish censorship – Joseph and Cherry Tree).[77] Specimen of kind of prose of Yeats we do not know.

Plays and Controversies p. 195.[78]

Early Yeats in The Countess Cathleen. p. 223.

Late Yeats in Four Plays for Dancers.

At the Hawk's Well. Influence of Pound: Fenollosa. Read introduction to Certain Noble Plays of Japan.[79] Yeats, in common with Chesterton, both democratic and aristocratic in revulsion against modern world. Hawk's Well written for Itow. Reminiscences of first performance.[80] Plot negligible – aim at unitary poetic-dramatic effect. p. 418-419.

Here we get far beyond National Drama.

A late work: The Resurrection.[81]

Yeats kept the real spirit of the theatre alive: whatever is going is in his debt. Myself and Auden. What importance of theatre for future.

ANGLO-AMERICAN POETRY.

Drinkwater, Masefield, Brooke, Davies, Gibson, Abercrombie, Blunden, Sassoon (all "era poets" except Owen and Rosenberg), the Sitwells.

De la Mare has been dealt with so well by Richards that no need to comment further.[82]

Housman. Something permanent about Housman. I believe he will continue to appeal to people at a certain stage of development. It is fundamentally a poetry of weakness. Violent bitterness, sign of some lack of purgation. Not adult. Compare Heine. The epidemic.[83] Chesterton – Belloc etc.

One performance of Georgian Poetry is two poems by Hodgson – 'The Bull,' and "The Song of Honour." Trouble with all this poetry was inbreeding.[84] Too English. Period very inferior in intelligence to 90s. Yeats quite apart. Intelligence of the time provided by Conrad and James, both under French and Russian influence.

Monro.[85]
Pound 1909: Contribution – Dante and the Provencal and Early Italians.
Eliot 1915: Contribution – Modern French and English 17th Century.

T. E. Hulme – the founder of Imagism. His history. The origins of Imagism.

Read his poems.[86]

The Image a permanent necessity of poetry. Not descriptive.

Poverty of Results. H. D. Aldington. Amy Lowell.

Evils of Free Verse. ~~It had influential life, rating influence for a time.~~ My own wholly a development out of blank verse. No relation to anything contemporary. Free verse requires a strong sense of Form. The thing must be conceived as a whole. The good effect was not to free verse, but to indicate that there were other ways of writing verse, and to release new content.

Imagists romantic – Pound – his origins (see my preface). The Spirit of Romance. His purgation under influences of Stendhal and Flaubert. Search to revive forms of poetry not considered poetic. The Epigram. Other imagists failed to develop (H. D. Aldington) or went their ways.

There is "free verse" but it is out of the tradition. Whitman – Lawrence – Justification of "notes for poems."

Flint on cadences – p. xii.[87]

But newer poetry makes use of rhyme and metre, and Hopkins; and alliteration and assonance. More forms – not less.

Both imagism and free verse not to be taken too seriously.

Expansion of subject matter. Hulme on the Fancy.[88] No purely regular verse.

Effect of Provencal on Pound.
Musical rhythm. Campion.
Exactness of statement. Guido.

"A Girl"[89] p. 49. Influence of Hulme.
"The Seafarer" p. 51.
"Salutation the Second" p. 68.

"Epitaphs" p. 96-97.
"The Lake Isle" p. 96
Browning Influence ["Near Perigord III"] p. 130.

POUND: MAUBERLEY AND CANTOS

The Verse Doctrine p. 201 ff.
Hulme on Precision – p. 136 ff.
Light social satire (Pound's Selected Poems) p. 149
Hugh Selwyn Mauberley. Possibly his greatest poem.

The Plan
Part I.
    a. Criticism of the Age.
    b. The War.
II.
    a.The Pre-Raphaelite Period.
    b. The Nineties.
    c. Types.
        (1) Beerbohm
        (2) Bennett
        (3) ~~Ford~~ Unknown novelist
        (4) Unknown lady
        (5) Society ladies
III. Envoi (1919) Interlude
IV.
    a. Self-criticism
    b. Self-analysis.
    c. Summing up.

(note cumulation of abstract words.)

Note effectiveness of rhyme in the variation from the norm – the irregularity of metre emphasises rhyme; so it comes with a certain surprise.

Note intensity and poignancy, rare in his work.

Mostly has presented himself through the Persona – uses of that – here direct.

In Cantos returns to the Persona in a more complex form.[90] Work of many years – eventually 100.

Importance of study of metric. MacLeish

Conquistador impossible without Pound. Great variety – monotony of Conquistador.[91]

Canto I – the Anglo-Saxon – alliteration
II – the materialisation of beasts.
VIII – the bald narrative. p. 28.
Introduction of Prose p. 38

Scheme.
A musical pattern taking the whole of history and treating it synchronously. Main theme.
Yeats's explanation p. 2.[92]
Possible that the effect of unity not to be asked for at this point

1. Odysseus descent into Hell.
2. The metamorphosis. Beautifully done p. 8
3. The Cid.
4. Metamorphoses.
5. Provence. Murder of Alessandro Medici.
6. Queen Eleanor (Henry II).
7. Reminiscences of Henry James, Vander Pyl,[93] Alessandro
8 – 11. Sigismundo Malatesta of Rimini.
12. Modern speculations.
13. Chinese Philosophy.
14 – 15. Hell Month.
16. The War and the Russian Revolution.
17. Mixture of old themes.
18. Modern Finance again. Zaharoff.
19. ditto, and voice of our man spoilt by the system.
20. Mixture.

Compendium of all that he has read and heard. Must judge for yourselves. Influence on versification immense.

GERARD HOPKINS

First, I promised to read a few selections from Pound's Cantos to illustrate the great variety of metric.

Canto I – descent into Hell. In the Anglo-Saxon manner. Cf. "The Seafarer." Note collocation of Homer in Renaissance Latin translation (Andreas Divus, p. 5) with Anglo-Saxon.

Canto II. The Metamorphosis. The story of Dionysus and Acoetes – p. 7. Genius in the metamorphosis: no one has done this since Ovid.

Canto V. The Alessandro motive, p. 18. Telescoping of same sense of destiny. Agamemnon-Alessandro – the Indian Army Captain, p. 87. Alessandro again finally, p. 27.

Exact Image, p. 10, p. 14. Repetition.

Canto VII. Eleanor. Homer. Ovid – Provence. France. Henry James. Vander Pyl. Eleanor, Homer, Provence, Greece, Paris, Dante, Virgil, Paris, Alessandro.

Gerard Hopkins. Very different from Pound but with him combines to influence poetry of present. History. Father Leahy's book – Jesuit priest.[94] His attempt definitely narrower than Pound's. Similarity in George Meredith ("Love in the Valley"). Recency of Hopkins' influence.

His theory of verse. p. 1. Logaoedic verse – "combining dactyls and spondees, or *logaoidikos* – combining prose and poetry."[95] Importance of disjunction of formal syntax (v. Proust's *Essay on Baudelaire*).[96] p. 3. Milton[97] – quote Milton p. 512.

Milton the great master of versification, especially of what is called *vers libre*.

Piers Plowman (Hopkins p. 6)[98]

Criticism of Read's theory of Rhythm.[99] (Read) p. 41.

My theory that poetry is right when it hesitates between two modes. But it must be the Right point of hesitation. Whitman's *Song of Myself*. (The Sea Fight).[100] Objection to Read's theory: that Pope is as right as Skelton.

Read: "Wordsworth was the first poet to be fully conscious of the distinction between poetry and wit writing" (43). But this is a false distinction. Wit writing *is* Poetry. "Wordsworth emancipated himself and the whole tradition of English poetry from the prevailing tyranny of wit-writing" (43). To which Gerard Hopkins returned.

"When the history of the last decade of English poetry comes to be written by a dispassionate critic, no influence will rank in importance with that of Gerard Manley Hopkins" [45].

In matters of versification, I am an ignoramus. I have not the slightest notion of what is right and what is wrong.

I would only remark that it is not so much a question of what to say as of how to say it. The poetry of Hopkins seems to me as *shocking*, in its way, as that of Pope. The main point about new poetry, how disturbing it is to the conventional consciousness. This by its syntax more than by its sentiments. Hopkins on the Falcon ["The Windhover"]. p. 29. Versification essentially a disturbance of the conventional language.

How Hopkins influences. On W. H. Auden.

HOPKINS AND OTHERS

May repeat myself, as last lecture so long ago.[101]

Recommend Read's book with reservations.

Read's distinction of poetry and wit writing. Illustration p. 42.[102] Is Pope really just wit writing? And if so, is not much of Hopkins wit writing too? Read "The Leaden Echo" p. 54. Cf. Benlowes.[103] Simple theme. Hopkins comes near to rhetoric. Possible that the next age of poetry may be age of rhetoric.

Read p. 49 on Sprung Rhythm.

Read "Woffully Araid" ["Woefully Arrayed"] (Skelton p. 7).[104]

Dunbar: "The Twa Cummeris" p. 84

"The Tretis of the Tua Mariit Wemen and the Wedo" p. 85

"The Flyting of Dunbar and Kennedie" p. 5

"Lament for the Makaris" p. 20[105]

Is Read's theory any more useful than my own similar theory? Cyril Tourneur p.168.[106]

Popularity of these poets today due not only to revival of interest in their metric, but sympathy with their acidity.

Very different from Hopkins.

Read parts of Hopkins's "The Blessed Virgin compared to the Air we Breathe" p. 56.

Invention of words for sake of compression. Other devices for compression used by modern poets (Cantos, "Triumphal March").[107]

Read's Theory again[108] p. 55.

I should consider it not as an alternative theory to that of "classical verse" but as a more comprehensive and various metric.

Another influence that of St.-John Perse. Who he is. Influence of Rimbaud. Thinking in Images. Cf. Old Testament.

Read passage from Anabase and cf. a passage from The Orators.[109] Cf. MacLeish.

Influence in poetry a complex matter. Partly

(1) by sympathy with mentality (Me Donne Skelton + Laforgue)
(2) by verbal innovations only (little sympathy of younger generation with Hopkins. ? Pound.
(3) by liberation only (e.g. my own).

Auden as a satirist, hence his affinity with Skelton and Dunbar – "Flyting".[110] Danger in this: intenser poetry in "Paid on Both Sides."[111] But his versatility and wit are beyond question.

Read Parts of "Ode to John Warner," p. 97.[112]

To return from this to War Poetry is to go a generation back. Wilfred Owen really belongs to the 90s in feeling – to the last Lionel Johnson, i.e. "Greater Love" p. 3. Compare the satiric spirit in Auden with that in Siegfried Sassoon (not really a poet). Compare even Pound's Cantos with his Mauberley in the spirit of the satire. Owen's great contribution the imperfect rhyme. Quote "Strange Meeting" p. 1. Document of a forgotten generation. Owen the only real "War Poet" (define). Others were real poets killed in the war.

Spender interesting as contrast to Auden – equally modern but minor. Propagandist. Read p. 29.

MacNeice – Empson – Bottrall.[113]

Wished to suggest that the poetry of younger men essentially different from that of Pound or of myself.

JOYCE AND LAWRENCE

Interest of parallel between Joyce and Lawrence. Doubt whether they can both appeal to same readers. Discount my preference for Joyce: friend of Joyce and never knew Lawrence – but should not have known Joyce if I had not admired his work. On the other hand feel racial antipathy to Irish: but civil wars are the bloodiest.

1. Contemporary.
2. Irish Catholic and English nonconformist. This colours their whole outlook. Hence Lawrence man with a message, Joyce none.
3. Different methods of writing.
4. Different education. The Jesuits – finest training there is, and the self taught miner's son.
5. Class consciousness. Joyce "gentleman" – Lawrence miner's son.
6. Both exiles.

7. Both were exceptionally sensitive children in an uncongenial environment. Hence
8. Relationship toward their parents most important.

Portrait and Sons and Lovers ought to be read together. That is why I have begun by treating the two men together. The confessions of two men who are great men because of their sincerity are to be respected. Warning against Middleton Murry. John Middleton Murry has been a friend of mine: I hope however that I may live long enough for him to be unable to write a book about me.[114]

Begin by comparing some early short stories. It is in one way unfair to compare Dubliners with The Prussian Officer.[115] Because Joyce a careful and sparse writer: Lawrence a diffuse one, it is unfair to compare any one work of Lawrence with any one work of Joyce. Nevertheless, there is something to be gained by comparing these two volumes of short stories written at about the same age.

Dubliners derives somewhat from French realists. Method of Maupassant. Take a "slice of life": exercise selection only in choosing the slice, not in choosing or arranging the elements in it. Some of Dubliners much better than others. But compare

"Bliss" by Katherine Mansfield
"The Dead" by James Joyce
"The Shadow in the Rose Garden" by Lawrence.[116]

Mr. Barber has already given you an excellent account of "Bliss." Mr. Haas has treated admirably Joyce's recreation of language, but in this lecture I wish to emphasise what tends to be neglected.[117] Mr. Joyce as an explorer of the human soul.

Recapitulate "Bliss"; "The Dead"; interminable party, everybody dealt with as equally important – the drunkenness – the aunts – Miss Ivor – middle middle class Dublin – Denouement: the early love affair.

"The Shadow in the Rose Garden": note Lawrence emphasis on physical relationship – true enough to life – but much greater delicacy of Joyce's choice. Possible that Lawrence is suffering from sadism like Hardy. The Protestant mind.

"Second Best" p. 180, p. 182. This is ominous.[118] "Prussian Officer" – Homosexual sadism again. "Daughters of the Vicar": the mésalliance theme. Sadism again.

"The Shades of Spring." The perpetual gamekeeper, that everlasting bore in Lawrence's work. p. 154. O that animal life! Syson and his old love who is now on with the gamekeeper[119] p. 165. Lawrence perpetually and distressingly occupied with human relationships. Always looking for the perfect relationship and of course never finding it. Not Catholic. Never even read Appearance and Reality. (My poems p. 118).[120] "Shades of Spring" p. 166. Essentially egotism.

Lawrence always (as we shall see) occupied with human relations and their failure. Joyce concerned with the relation of man to God.

The Portrait more direct autobiography than Sons and Lovers.[121] (Read More on Proust in the American Review on the novel as autobiography).[122] Lawrence's sensibility always more direct. Cf. Lawrence occupied directly with a field of bluebell (Especially wild hyacinth).[123] With Joyce continual network of association (Portrait p. 24). In Joyce, Sense of History, in Lawrence only sense of moment.

In Portrait the Sense of Sin is key. The sermon on perdition, his confession. Training in confession perhaps gives Joyce greater self-knowledge than Lawrence. Beauty of Sons and Lovers that Lawrence is compelled by some inspiration to confess his own failure: his failure toward Miriam, who was better than he; his failure even toward Clara. His relations towards Baxter Dawes admirably put.

The relations of Paul Morel with women compared with relations of Stephen Dedalus. Both wrong: but with Paul Morel you get individualism – the sense of the why of the misfit between any particular man and woman. In Stephen, in spite of the greater sordidness, you get the Catholic idea: the sense that society is more important than the happiness of the individual, hence none of the sentimentality you find in Sons and Lovers. In the latter you find only individuals, in the former you find society. To me, Sons and Lovers is devoid of moral sense, an evil book: and the Portrait is directed by moral sense. Lawrence is never afflicted by issues like this:

Portrait, p. 276, p. 281.

On the other hand, Lawrence, being less concerned with ideas, except as they come through knowledge of individuals, can write a passage about the death of his mother as Joyce could not.

Sons and Lovers, p. 491.

Joyce sees the particular from the general, the concrete from the abstract. Lawrence vice versa. Joyce interested in ideas for their own sake (vide the discussion of aesthetics in The Portrait) Lawrence only as they arise from experience.

The difference of Catholic and Protestant. I must be with Joyce. Yet Lawrence is in a position to tell us things about the relations of individuals that Joyce cannot.

JOYCE AND LAWRENCE II

The Portrait more direct autobiography than Sons and Lovers. Everything seen directly from point of view of author, and of author seeing himself as central figure. (Autobiographical novel: Read More on Proust in American Review).

Extreme difference of relation of idea to sensation. What you would expect: see previous lecture. In Lawrence you get the experience: then he theorises about it. In Joyce the idea and the sensation are one. In one way, Lawrence very theoretic, and Joyce appears to hold no views. But in Lawrence you can to some extent dissociate the record of experience from the theory, and insofar you can get the best of him; part of his popularity due to his ability to suggest that he has a solution of a problem as well as a statement of it.

In descriptive passages. Sons and Lovers, p. 197 ff. Direct relation to scenery. As everywhere in Lawrence. Lawrence is a kind of Wordsworthian; nature, being enjoyed for its own sake, comes to fit in to the action and symbolise it.

Essentially a countryman, like most English. Joyce essentially a townsman. Portrait p. 24. p. 74. Mercedes – Marseilles [68].[124] Necessity for thinking of different things together. Sense of geography and history: space and time.

In Portrait Sense of Sin is key. Difficulty for non Catholic of understanding: Catholicism not superstition he outgrew. Scepticism of Joyce: Portrait p. 276. A man like Lawrence repudiates "Congregationalism" of his mother – and invents something else to believe.[125] A man like Joyce may lose the Catholic Faith of his mother – and has gone too far to believe anything else.

Portrait p. 277.

The Sense of Sin is key to Portrait, Ulysses. So few people have this that imperfectly appreciated. Take his refusal on his mother's deathbed – turns up in Nighttown scene in Ulysses. Portrait permeated therewith. Lawrence without it: rather with sense of righteousness.

Lawrence and Miriam. Greatness of book in spite of himself in that he sets down how he fell short of Miriam.

Blasphemy: Lawrence incapable of.[126]

Confessional: teaches honesty, advantage in Joyce. Thoroughly conscious, Lawrence not. Beauty of Sons and Lovers that Lawrence is compelled by some inspiration to confess his own failure, toward Miriam, toward Clara Dawes. Cf. Murry's novels as Lawrence manqué.[127]

Great Protestant moralists: – (Protestantism: Lawrence, Murry, Huxley).
Compare relations of Paul vs. Stephen toward women.
Paul, with Miriam and with Clara.
Stephen at 16, confessing. p. 164.
but p. 195 ff. Vita Nuova.[128]

With Paul you get individualism. In Stephen always the Catholic idea: that society is more important than the individual. Catholic paradox: society is for the salvation of the individual and individual must be sacrificed to society. Communism merely a heresy, but heresy better than nothing. With Paul (and his successors) you have anarchism – the happiness of individual only thing that matters. The intimate relations of any two human beings do not concern themselves alone – concern whole of society, and can only be right if society is recognised. Lawrence always concerned with why two human beings, as isolated individuals, fail to click. Looking for Congregationalist solution.

The sins of Stephen may appear greater, or certainly more sordid. But they recognise a standard. I am not defending tolerated brothels. But Stephen knew what repentance is, and Paul just treats everything as experience. The Christian view related to the Greek. Aristotle's Politics.

To me, Sons and Lovers is an immoral book, because no sense of individual's duty to society: only the old Radical Manchester School view of the right of the superior individual to rise in society. As Lawrence's ideas of rising are concerned with sex, so his ideal is miners fornicating with duchesses. But not idea of fundamental equality – it is idea of "bettering oneself."

Pride in the two men. Joyce's consciously Satanic, and therefore leaves opening for humility –

Portrait p. 281.
Hatred of Ireland – England – Catholic Church – Protestantism – rather complicated.

Inferiority in both.
Lawrence's Letters, p. 34, p. 93

Seem to have dealt with weaknesses – but you need to know these to understand the strength of great men and writers.[129]

Lawrence, less concerned with ideas, imperception, can write a passage about the death of his mother such as the more confessional and more reticent Joyce could not.

Sons and Lovers p. 491

Joyce sees particular in general, the [page missing]

ULYSSES AND WORK IN PROGRESS[130]

So far dealt with Joyce and Lawrence together. From this point divaricate: Joyce's progress and Lawrence's decline.

Difficult to deal with Ulysses in the space. Work which can be studied indefinitely – Dante. Admonishment about Commentaries: Gilbert and Curtius.[131]

Ulysses direct continuation of Portrait – more objective. Joyce must be read in chronological order.

The Interior Monologue. Dujardin.[132] Misunderstood. Not exact way people think. "Thinking" is done in words, but stream of consciousness is largely not words. The method simply prolongation of that of Portrait.

Portrait p. 195, p. 255

Ulysses p. 49[133]

The Framework. Gilbert. Necessary for author rather than for reader.[134]

The Synchronisation. (cf. Pound and myself). Several periods of time and several planes of reality at once. Strong historical sense, and of everything happening at once. Not in Woolf and Lawrence. Contrast Historical Novel. Gets away from straight narrative. (Mrs. Woolf to some extent). Intensity by association. ("Leicester Abbey lit up") [19].[135] In some minds certain memories, both from reading and life, become charged with emotional significance, or else certain minds are more aware of this than others. All these are used, so that intensity is gained at the expense of clarity. The real deeper emotional current of life is continuous, but ordinarily is not in full consciousness. Scenery is not described, but is felt.

Realism does not lie in not selecting, but in not selecting according to the accepted sense of values, but sincerely those things which have the most intensity for the writer. Outside and inside are one.

Cyclops. p. 280

Cf. Haveth Childers Everywhere.[136]

Style. Most and least style of any contemporary author. Variety throughout. Style usually a limitation, or the limitation of thought and feeling determines style.

Use of clichés. p. 573

Unacceptable unless you can accept unity of tragedy and comedy. Ulysses is really high tragedy.

The last scene like end of a great symphony.

Obscenity. Have never been able to understand this, though very easily shocked. Lady Chatterley's Lover, pornographic literature. Sometimes find am shocked by books which shock other people – cf. Well of Loneliness case[137] – but for different reasons. Everything in Ulysses in perfect taste. There is nothing obscene about telling the truth. Shelley says

The Devil did grin for his favourite sin
Is Pride that apes Humility.[138]

That is profoundly true, and the Devil's next favourite sin is Vice that apes Virtue, and then Perversity that apes Normality. He is fond of apes. There is no aping in Ulysses. It is not wrong to call a spayed a gelded sow. Ulysses one of the most moral books ever written.

cf. Tom MacGreevy. p. 120-123.[139]

The great Circe scene (Walpurgisnacht, cf Murry,[140] but much better than Goethe) could not possibly shock anyone used to take the confessional seriously. Can only shock those – the great majority – who do not like to face facts. There may be people with "pure minds" (cf. R.H. [Ralph Hodgson] on the mind as a sewer) but I believe they are very exceptional.[141] Not purity, but purification, is important. Asperges me.[142] The Catholic idea is that of Purification.

Extraordinary skill with which phantasmagoria managed. p. 458. Mixture of reality, drunkenness, mental imagery.

Mixture of Stephen's and Bloom's torments

Bloom and his father p. 116

history of the cake of soap and potato.

Incidentally origin of Auden's airman, (crossed with Lewis)[143] – p. 458

Stephen and mother p. 545.

Bloom and Rudy, p. 569. v. p. 731, woolly jacket.

Continuity of Work in Progress. with Ulysses same as with Portrait. Monologue of Molly – Still more elaborate mythology.

Anna Livia Plurabelle metamorphosis. Dramatic dialogue. Intensification of River idea.

Gramophone.

JOYCE AND LAWRENCE [III]

Last words on Joyce. Pure Fun throughout Ulysses (and Work in Progress). Quote Cyclops. Pathos. Quote Rudy (in last part and end of Circe). Horror – Stephen's mother. Joyce and Milton.

Little time left. The antithesis between Joyce and Lawrence represents the crisis of our time which is more acute than that represented by the time [of] Shaw and Wells = Chesterton and Belloc. Also more profound. What I call angelic vs. daemonic. Lewis intellectually angelic and emotionally demonic. Define the angelic: Baudelaire, Laforgue, Joyce, and the daemonic: Blake, Rimbaud, Lawrence.

Joyce must be read chronologically – Lawrence must not. After Sons and Lovers read Fantasia and Letters: clue to other novels. Lady Chatterley's Lover which otherwise seems and essentially is, the gibbering of an illiterate erotomaniac, becomes more intelligible, though hardly more acceptable, when we understand Lawrence's ideas and his perversities.

Decency and Indecency are not fundamental ideas. Orthodoxy and Heresy are; hence Ulysses is decent but Chatterley is not.

A Heretic (like Lawrence) essentially gives us much trouble because a real heretic is one who has a firm grasp of part, and only part, of the Truth. A real heretic can be very useful if we know how to use him. Now Lawrence has several conspicuous weaknesses which must be understood.

1) He gave his best to his mother.

What he says about mother-love in the Fantasia is better than all the psychoanalysts.

2) He is a Sadist, like Hardy.

That Mole.[144] "The Woman Who Rode Away."

Love or Sex always associated with Pain, with Sadism or Masochism. His Sadism involved with

3) His snobbery. V. letters: very polite to Lady Cynthia Asquith. When he affirms his belief in aristocracy he probably thought of himself as one of the aristocrats, but he makes clear that he was made to serve.[145] Letters, p. 93. Richthofen!![146] Sadism and Snobbery combine in his perpetual coitions between well born ladies and savages. Women usually socially superior to men, so you get notion that they are voluntarily defiling themselves.

Gamekeepers – Chatterley the last word in this: but again, Mellors is like Billy Bennett "Almost a Gentleman": he was an Officer!![147] Remark that the celebrated monosyllables are decent in Ulysses but not in Chatterley.

(Excursus, if there is time, on Censorship – Well of Loneliness – Lawrence – Jix (both blood black Protestants).[148] Awkwardness of having to defend immoral books because they were attacked by immoral people on the wrong grounds.

4) Hatred of human beings. Sign of immaturity. Swift, Anatole France, undeveloped.

The heretic an individualist, therefore his own axe is being ground while he is arguing a general case – and that is what makes things wrong. Now in Lawrence we find (1) the artist involved with bad theories (2) the theorist whose theories have much good in them. When he is Artist his theories appear at their worst. As artist he is always truthful, as theorist he has part of the Truth.

He hates the Dead-Alive: it does not follow that his notion of Life is Good Life.

In Aaron's Rod great powers of observation. His dialogue – you hear the people talking. And then he introduces an entirely theoretic person – the Countess – Sleepy Siren who is quite unreal. In The Plumed Serpent you get marvellous description and recording (as I believe in Kangaroo): the Bull Fight, the hatred of the Civilised person for a country of Horror and Hate: you do not merely see the landscape and people of Mexico, you feel them: and you feel them not merely as Lawrence did, but as you would. Yet the Lady capitulates: not really to something better, but merely, obscenely, to something different.

The Artist has immense descriptive and evocative powers: makes you feel Places and People. The Theorist (Fantasia) says much that I heartily applaud. About education (Quote) p. 87, 99.[149] About the relation of the Sexes and about the idealisation of Love. About Dreams. But because we are all prudent clerks in an enormous Bank, thinking of our Pensions, Lawrence would have us all become worshippers of some primitive god offering Human Sacrifices. I agree that that is preferable, but not only alternative. Plumed Serpent is unconscious and ignorant blasphemy, and that is the Evil kind.

Said in letter 1913 was chiefly interested in relations of men and women.[150] So were Henry James, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf and others.

You can go on with this indefinitely and get nowhere. Immature. Joyce interested in relations of man with God. Lawrence's notions of relations [of] man and woman sensible though tainted with his Real Man conception of himself – 8-cylinder man with plenty of spare parts. Heretic Messiah. Just the sort to affect the Feeble like Aldous Huxley – the clever immature, who have no Knowledge of the Tradition.

LEWIS; AND FINALE OF SEEM[151]

The space that I have given to various writers does not exactly represent my opinion of their importance, but rather my ability to make use of them as symbols of the modern world. I think that Wyndham Lewis (don't confuse with D.B. – Diabolus Benedicat)[152] is probably more important than the space I can give him. You must work these things out for yourselves; if you expect to get anything out of this course don't expect me to do all the work: I am not telling you, only suggesting.

I have proposed the Lawrence-Joyce antithesis. But a triangle is a very much more interesting relation, and Lewis forms the third angle. He is the best connective to both. Read Lewis on Joyce in Time and the Western Man and on Lawrence in Paleface. I suggested the antithesis of the angelic and daemonic. Where is Lewis? Intellectually angelic, but emotionally – I leave the question unanswered.

Mention Porteus' Book.[153]

I think best beginning of Lewis is still Tarr (Reminiscences of 1914-1915).[154] Must be remembered that Lewis is primarily a draughtsman, not an amateur painter like Lawrence. His superiority in line to paint. Drawings masterly: cf. Pollaiuolo and Hokusai.[155] His prose vision that of a draughtsman rather than painter – not so much colours but forms, muscular tensions and stresses to communicate feeling.

Tarr twofold. Satirical element – Paris Bohemia; Dramatic element – Russian novelists. The first more fundamental.

Hobson, attitude toward. p. 3.
The pseudo-artist. p. 16-17.
The finale of Hobson p. 18.
The Duel. p. 265 The Suicide p. 287

This is the other side of Lewis, one must be very careful to see other sides. But the more permanent Lewis is illustrated in his conversation with Hobson about Sex. p. 11-12.

Now this is excellent antidote to the feminine mother-fluttering of Lawrence: but we are not to accept it for gospel. The weak spot in Lewis is his deification of the artist. All his social-political ideas spring from that. The spring of his philosophy is in the question: what is the position of the Artist in the Modern World? and that comes from this: Lewis is an artist, the greatest contemporary artist, and he is not appreciated, far from it. Regrettable aestheticism.

This also spring of Apes of God (Reminiscence effect of Apes on Bloomsbury in Criterion version). The Encyclical,[156] p. 118.

Time and Western Man his most important critical work. The Wild Body in fiction.

PURPOSE OF THIS COURSE

Could do it much better a second time.

We must remember that past literature was once present and consider what English 26 would have been in 1633 (given by Mr. Fletcher or Mr. Tourneur) – would have made as many mistakes as I am probably making now. Also what present literature will be when it is past – English Literature from 1893 to 1933.

Remind you of reservations of my point of view: too involved to be dispassionate – the military metaphor.

My idea merely to suggest ways of organising contemporary literature as it flows by – not merely submitting to it passively like a Book of the Month Club member – but arranging it in relation to some permanent scale of values. Trying to see all literature as timeless. A course like this would especially have to differ every year, as new literature is written. Its use should be for those who will go on to read "contemporary literature" as it is produced. It should enlarge our comparisons – just as I have judged Milton by Joyce and Joyce by Milton.

Has been profitable to me, at least.

Invitation.[157]

NOTES

1. F. O. Matthiessen quotes directly from TSE's lecture notes (while in the possession of TSE or Spencer) when he notes in *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot* (1935) that TSE does not share Pound's enthusiasm for Browning, "though he has remarked, in an unpublished lecture on the late nineteenth-century background for modern poetry, that Browning was the only poet of

that period 'to devise a way of speech which might be useful for others,' that what he had to teach lay in his 'use of non-poetic material,' in his reassertion of 'the relation of poetry to speech'" (73).

2. Sir Henry Sumner Maine (1822-88), comparative jurist, social philosopher, and historian of ancient and international law, spent part of his career as legal and political adviser to the British government in India. He argued in his *Popular Government: Four Essays* (1885), which includes "The Constitution of the United States," that democracy is no more stable than other forms of government, and that unless popular governments evolve with the development of a people, they will collapse from their own excesses.

3. Charles Whibley, high-Tory conservative; Sir Henry Slesser, high-Church Anglican and later Catholic convert, Fabian, barrister, Labour MP.

4. Charles Wood, 2nd Viscount Halifax (1839-1934), son of a prominent Whig politician, was an ecumenist who served as president of the English Church Union, a society dedicated to the promotion of Catholic principles within the Church of England. Halifax inscribed a copy of his *The Good Estate of the Catholic Church* (1930) to TSE when they met on 8 Feb 1932. William Lygon, 7th Earl Beauchamp (1872-1938), high-church Anglican and Liberal Party Leader in the House of Lords; George Ambrose Lloyd, first Baron Lloyd (1879-1941), a devout Anglo-Catholic, was a Tory imperialist, with service in India and Egypt, and chairman of the Empire Economic Union.

5. John Cook Wilson, Wykeham Professor of Logic at New College, Oxford, was the founder of the "Oxford Realism" group of philosophers; his student H. A. Prichard, was White's Professor of Moral Philosophy at Trinity College, Oxford.

6. C. D. Broad (1887-1971), Professor of Moral Philosophy at Cambridge and philosopher of science and psychical research, authored *Scientific Thought* (1923) and *The Mind and its Place in Nature* (1925); Sir Edwyn C. Hoskyns (1884-1937), Anglican theologian, biblical scholar, and Dean of Chapel at Corpus Christi College, Cambridge; and Will Spens, Master of Corpus Christi, were both counter-Modernist conservatives and Catholic revivalists who contributed to the influential *Essays Catholic and Critical by Members of the Anglican Communion* (1926). On 7 Mar 1927, as he began to prepare for his conversion, TSE wrote to Stead: "At present I am slowly working over the Essays Catholic and Critical" (*L3* 437).

7. C. K. Ogden (1889-1957), Cambridge psychologist, linguist, and author of *Basic English: A General Introduction with Rules and Grammar* (1930), collaborated with I. A. Richards on *The Foundation of Aesthetics* (1922) and *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923), both of which are in TSE's library. Richards became the tutor of William Empson (1906-1984) after the Cambridge graduate of mathematics went on to pursue a second degree in English and to publish *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (1930) when he was twenty-four.

8. TSE had recently reviewed Haakon M. Chevalier's *The Ironic Temper: Anatole France and his Time* (New York: Oxford UP, 1932) in his *Criterion* "Commentary" for Apr 1933, describing it as "a very sympathetic and understanding analysis of Anatole France" (4.515). TSE recommended "especially" France's *La Vie littéraire* (4 vols) for "neo-classicism, neo-Catholicism, etc." in his 1916 Extension course on Modern French Literature (1.476).

9. C. L. Sulzberger wrote of Eliot's lecture: "Even in 1933 he forecast that Hemingway would be regarded as the Kipling of his time. Kipling was then seen as 'square.' Ultimately, Eliot predicted, both would find equal literary rank." *A Long Row of Candles*, 4.

10. Bonamy Dobrée's "Rudyard Kipling" appeared in the *Criterion* of Dec 1927 (499-515) and later in *The Lamp and the Lute* (1929). "Indeed," Dobrée remarks of Kipling's desire to have a country of his own, "his craving for roots makes even the deck of a P and O British soil; British because he is a citizen of the Empire, not of England alone, for if it were essential to be the latter, he would be partly dispossessed" (507). P and O: England-India ocean liner built by the Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation Company.

11. In "Reingelder and the German Flag" (1889), the far-traveled naturalist Hans Breitmann describes to Kipling's narrator at sea, in heavily German-accented English, how in Uruguay his companion Reingelder died violently from the bite of a coral snake, called the "German Flag" for the similarity of its color bands to the old imperial German flag.

12. TSE later wrote of "The Hollow Men" in "The Unfading Genius of Rudyard Kipling" that he "would never have thought of this title but for Kipling's 'The Broken Men.'" *Kipling Journal*, 26 (Mar 1959), 9-12.

13. Mr. Dooley, Irish-born saloon-keeper in the Chicago neighborhood of Bridgeport, was a fictional character of the Irish-American journalist Finley Peter Dunne. His "Mr. Dooley's Respects to Rudyard Kipling," written in Dooley's thick ethnic dialect, first appeared in the *Chicago Journal* and reappeared in the *Los Angeles Herald*, 26 (24 Nov 1898), beginning: "I think," said Mr. Dooley, "th' finest pothry in th' wur-ruld is wrote be that fri'nd of young Hogan's, a man be th' name iv Roodyard Kipling. I see his pomes in th' pa-aper . . . an' they're all right. They was wan about seraggin' Danny Deever than done me a wur-ruld of good" (8); rpt. as "Rudyard Kipling" in Dunne's *Mr. Dooley: In the Hearts of his Countrymen* (Boston: Small, Maynard, 1899), 13-17. A copy is in TSE's library.

14. In the "Author's Note" to *A Personal Record* (1919), Conrad recalls of their first meeting that his friend Sir Hugh Charles Clifford (1866-1941), British colonial administrator in Malay, ended, after initial praise, "by telling me with the uncompromising yet kindly firmness of a man accustomed to speak unpalatable truths . . . that as a matter of fact I didn't know anything about Malays . . . and I was moved to retort: 'Of course I don't know anything about Malays. If I knew only one hundredth part of what you . . . know of Malays I would make everybody sit up.' He went on looking kindly (but firmly) at me and then we both burst out laughing." (Marlboro, VT: Marlboro Press, 1982), viii-ix.

15. In chapter XI of Kipling's first novel (1891), the artist Dick Hedlar explains to Torpenhow how he created the extraordinary features of a woman's portrait: "That's trick-work," he explains. "It's a French trick. . . . It was flagrant trick-work; but, having the notion fixed, I felt entitled to play with it."

16. A fictional detective character created by H. C. McNeile in his 1920 novel *Bulldog Drummond: The Adventures of a Demobilized Officer Who Found Peace Dull*, the first of a series of novels, stories, and screenplays about the World War I veteran.

17. Kipling's three characters first appear in "The Three Musketeers" (1888), where he describes them as "Privates in B Company of a Line regiment, and personal friends of mine." Dobrée ranks them among Kipling's symbolic characters who "have God's plenty within them: there were forgotten toilers in out-stations; and above all there were Mulvaney, Ortheris, and Learoyd. Nor must it pass unnoticed that all his three soldiers had trodden paths of bitterness, and were at times subject to an overwhelming sorrow akin to madness, the sorrow of disillusion. They are of value as symbols precisely because they have outfaced much. They were none of them

obviously successful, for Mr. Kipling despises success except that which consists in keeping one's soul intact" (511).

18. In Kipling's "Bertran and Bimi" (1891), a story told at sea by his German narrator Hans Breitmann, the French naturalist Bertran lives in a brotherly relationship with his cigar-smoking orangutan, Bimi, who in jealousy of Bertran's young wife kills her, leading to a struggle in which Bertran and Bimi kill each other.

19. Shaw edited the first edition of *Fabian Essays in Socialism* (1889) and contributed two essays, "The Basis of Socialism: Economic," and "The Transition to Social Democracy: Transition." When the volume appeared in a fifth edition in 1931, including Shaw's prefaces to previous editions, TSE reviewed it in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of July 1931; there he comments on Lord Olivier's disparaging remarks on the Catholic Church and the Protestant religion: "It must be admitted that Lord Olivier, if he patronises the Catholic Church, is downright disrespectful to Protestantism. What *is* the religion of a Fabian, anyway" (4.307). TSE's copy with marginal comments is in his library.

20. Chesterton writes in "Some Aspects of Machinery," part IV of *The Outline of Sanity*: "And *if* it can be shown that machinery has come into the world as a curse, there is no reason whatever for our respecting it because it is a marvellous and practical and productive curse. There is no reason why we should not leave all its powers unused, if we have come to the conclusion that the powers do us harm" (145).

21. Chesterton writes in part I, "The Beginning of the Quarrel": "I do not mind saying 'cat' for capitalism and 'dog' for distributism, so long as people understand that the things are different enough to fight like cat and dog. The proposal of the wider distribution of capital remains the same, whatever we call it, or whatever we call the present glaring contradiction of it" (7).

22. The Fabian activist and writer G. D. H. Cole (1889-1959) and his wife, Margaret Cole (1893-1980), collaborated on detective stories that reflected Fabian principles; their *A Lesson in Crime, and Other Stories* appeared in 1933.

23. Shaw's five novels, listed by composition and publication date, include *Immaturity* (1879, 1931); *The Irrational Knot* (1880, 1905); *Love among the Artists* (1881, 1900); *Cashel Byron's Profession* (1882, 1886); and *An Unsocial Socialist* (1883, 1887). His *Plays Unpleasant* (1898) include *Widowers' Houses* (1892), *The Philanderer* (1893), and *Mrs. Warren's Profession* (1893).

24. Matthew 23:37: "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killeth the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together . . . and ye would not!" Also Hosea 14:1: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, return unto the Lord thy God," recited in the liturgy of Holy Week; see TSE's quotation of the line in his 1928 Introduction to *The Merry Masque of Our Lady in London Town* (3.564)

25. Haakon Chevalier, describing how France was dependent on the solicitude and prodding of his mother and other mother-figures for his writing, reports: "In his last moments he several times murmured the word: 'Maman!'" (*The Ironic Temper*, 155).

26. Wells's *The Time Machine: An Invention* (1898), a classic time-travel novel.

27. In *Man and Superman*, first performed in 1905, the plot revolves around the anarchist John Tanner's *The Revolutionist's Handbook and Pocket Companion*, which Shaw published as a fifty-eight-page appendix to the play. Ann Whitfield, who defies his revolutionary views with her own beliefs, charms the confirmed bachelor into marriage.

28. Shaw wrote in a preface to *Major Barbara* (1903): "It drives me almost to despair of English literature when one sees so extraordinary a study of English life as [Samuel] Butler's posthumous 'Way of All Flesh' [1903] making so little impression that when . . . I produce plays in which Butler's extraordinarily fresh, free and future-piercing suggestions have an obvious share, I am met with nothing but vague cacklings about Ibsen and Nietzsche." Shaw's "The Quintessence of Ibsenism" appeared in 1891; he reflected Nietzsche's struggle for power in *Man and Superman*.

29. Ann Whitfield in *Man and Superman*, Fanny O'Dowda in *Fanny's First Play* (1911), and Ellie Dunne in *Heartbreak House* (1919).

30. See Chesterton's *The Victorian Age in Literature* (1903) and *Charles Dickens: A Critical Study* (1906), both of which TSE assigned in his 1916 Extension course on Modern English Literature (1.481), the former of which he criticized in "In Memory of Henry James" (1.648), "Verse Pleasant and Unpleasant" (1.679), and "Professional, or . . ." (1.698).

31. From chapter X, "On Sandals and Simplicity," in Chesterton's *Heretics* (New York: John Lane, 1909), 136.

32. Chesterton created the priest-detective Father Brown in over fifty detective stories in five collections from *The Innocence of Father Brown* (1911) to *The Scandal of Father Brown* (1935).

33. In his even-handed satirical portrait, "Mr. Bernard Shaw," in *Heretics*, Chesterton states that "If man, as we know him, is incapable of the philosophy of progress, Mr. Shaw asks, not for a new kind of philosophy, but for a new kind of man" (66), and in portraits of the foibles of other "heretics," he brings in Shaw as an object of comparison, both disagreeing with and defending him.

34. Chesterton contributed to the economic ideology of distributism, based on the principles of Catholic social teaching, in *The Outline of Sanity* (1926), which TSE reviewed in the *Criterion* of May 1927 (3.138-39). Chesterton was president of the Distributist League and editor of its political organ, *GK's Weekly*. On 29 Oct 1930, TSE was elected Hon. Vice-President of the Glasgow University Distributist Club, of which Chesterton was also president (*L5* xliv).

35. "I think that machines may be of considerable use in destroying machinery," Chesterton states at the beginning of his chapter on "The Free Man and the Ford Car" (171). He then contrasts Henry Ford with Arthur J. Penty, a Fabian, Distributist, and follower of Ruskin: "The other day I found myself in a Ford car, like that in which I remember riding over Palestine, and in which (I suppose) Mr. Ford would enjoy riding over Palestinians. Anyhow, it reminded me of Mr. Ford, and that reminded me of Mr. Penty and his views upon equality and mechanical civilization" (173).

In the next chapter, Chesterton attacks the mental attitude behind the colonial seizure of property: "There was in the vague idea of his gaining something for the Empire always, if anything, the idea of his gaining what belonged to somebody else. . . . I am pointing out that nobody ever entertained the notion of the other sort of right; the special right of every man to his own" (195).

36. "Defence of Rash Vows" originally appeared in *The Defendant* (1903), a collection of essays, and was later abridged for inclusion in *A Defense of Nonsense, and Other Essays* (1911).

37. TSE quotes from Chesterton's *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908) in "The Modern Dilemma": "It is not true that we have never been broken: we have been broken upon the wheel" (4.814).

38. See Ramon Fernandez, *Messages: Literary Essays: Balzac, Stendhal, Conrad, Maritain, Newman, Meredith, Freud, Pater, T. S. Eliot* (1926), reviewed by TSE in "Mr. Read and M. Fernandez" (2.834). TSE published Fernandez's "The Experience of Newman" in the *Criterion* of Oct 1924; its success led TSE to invite him to be "a constant contributor" (*L2* 530).

39. In his Page-Barbour lectures, TSE described the novel as Hardy's "finest novel as a whole" (*ASG* 56).

40. In Dickens's *Little Dorrit*, Mr. Merdle is a fraudulent financier who commits suicide when his bank business collapses. In *Bleak House*, Krook is a gin-drinking landlord who dies of spontaneous combustion.

41. See TSE's review of H. C. Duffin's *Thomas Hardy: A Study of the Wessex Novels* (1.404).

42. Gabriel Oak's watch is "a small silver clock" that goes "too fast or not at all," requires "thumps and shakes," and is removed from his pocket "like a bucket from a well."

43. Anton Chekhov's short story "The Lady with the Dog" appeared in 1899.

44. In "Guy de Maupassant" (1904), collected in *Notes on Life and Letters* (London: Dent, 1921), Conrad states that "it can be safely affirmed that this man wrote from the fullness of a compassionate heart. He is merciless and yet gentle with his mankind; he does not rail at their prudent fears and their small artifices; he does not despise their labours . . . he looks with an eye of profound pity upon their troubles, deceptions and misery. But he looks at them all. He sees – and does not turn away his head" (29). In the opening essay "Books" (1905), Conrad states: "Liberty of imagination should be the most precious possession of a novelist. To try voluntarily to discover the fettering dogmas of some romantic, realistic, or naturalistic creed in the free work of its own inspiration, is a trick worthy of human perverseness . . . It is a weakness of inferior minds when it is not the cunning device of those who, uncertain of their talent, would seek to add lustre to it by the authority of a school" (7-8).

45. In illustration of James's "fifty years of devout and untiring service" to his craft, Percy Lubbock quotes from James's notes his exalted state on rediscovering his creativity on the threshold of writing a new novel: "the prospect cleans and flushes, and my poor blest old Genius pats me so admirably and lovingly on the back that I turn . . . and bend my lips to passionately, in my gratitude, kiss its hands." *The Letters of Henry James*, ed. Percy Lubbock, vol 1 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1920), xxi.

46. See TSE's review in "The Two Unfinished Novels" (1918) (1.653).

47. Jósef Pilsudski (1867-1935), military commander, statesman, and leader of the Second Republic of Poland (1926-35), had been a friend of Conrad since 1914. TSE refers to pagination in *Joseph Pilsudski: The Memories of a Polish Revolutionary and Soldier*, ed. and trans. D. R. Gillie (London: Faber and Faber, 1931): Pilsudski writes in the midst of doubts about a difficult military decision: "often a sound idea detached itself from chaos almost unconsciously, even giving me a rest, while self-criticism constantly active, at the same time worked out the basis of each given idea" (264). "By brain work," he writes of his imprisonment, "I can dull the longing which is the weariest side of prison life. . . . To destroy the longing that was consuming me, I forced myself to analyse my conduct as commander. . . . For a long time I worked in thought alone" (355-56).

48. Jack London (1876-1916), American journalist and adventure writer; TSE likely makes the contrast to his novel, *The Sea-Wolf* (1904), a psychologically complex sea story in

which a man is rescued after a collision at sea by a cynical and dominating captain, Wolf Larsen.

49. Theodora Bosanquet (1881-1961) James's amanuensis from 1907 to his death in 1916, took dictation from him on her typewriter, as described in her memoir, *Henry James at Work* (1924).

50. In his *The Pilgrimage of Henry James* (1925), Brooks argued that James's writing and style were diminished by his expatriation from America.

51. On 28 and 30 Mar 1915, James wrote to Marsh in analysis of five of Brooke's "1914" Sonnets, referring to him in the first letter as "Splendid Rupert – to be the soldier that could beget them on the Muse! . . . I think of him quite inordinately, and not less so of you, my dear Eddie"; and again in the second as "Splendid Rupert indeed – and splendid *you* in the generosity of your emotion!" *The Letters of Henry James*, ed. Percy Lubbock, vol 2 (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1920), 462-64. James had asked that the first letter be sent by Marsh to Brooke, who received it two days before his death in April. James then wrote an essay in the form of a preface, his last work, to Rupert Brooke's travel essays, *Letters from America* (1916).

52. TSE's continuing dialogue with J. S. ("Jim") Barnes on the nature of fascism began in print and conversation with his review of Barnes's *The Universal Aspects of Fascism* (3.540, esp. n.6) and continued through "Mr. Barnes and Mr. Rowse" (3.657). Barnes also contributed "The Nature of Art and the Function of Art" to the *Criterion* of Apr 1931 (462-79).

53. In *Our America* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1919), the American novelist and critic Waldo Frank (1889-1967) announced a new generation of pioneering American writers who "go forth all" (10) to seek the drama and struggle of American life – at the expense of those "*genteel*" American writers whose imaginations and bodies could not live in the American world, particularly Henry James, whom he characterizes as "a strange sort of monster – to my prejudiced eye – with vast peripheral development and no depth. All his life he gave up to the creation of a world rootless like himself, brilliant and intricate and superficial like his own centrifugal life (74). Frank attended the dinner for TSE and his lecture on "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry" at the New School of Social research on 20 Apr (4.832, n.3).

54. Jean de Menasce (1902-73), born in Alexandria, son of wealthy Austrian Baron Felix de Menasce, graduate of Balliol College, Oxford, friend of Cavafy, Maritain, and other European writers, met TSE and other English writers through Lady Ottoline Morrell. Described by TSE as his "best translator," he translated *The Waste Land*, *Ash-Wednesday*, and other works into French. At this time, he was in Paris studying for the Catholic priesthood, into which he was ordained in 1935.

55. See TSE's 1918 essay on James, "The Hawthorne Aspect" (1.736).

56. See James's *Hawthorne* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1879). After Matthiessen read this section of TSE's lecture notes, he had him elaborate, as recorded in *American Renaissance*: "When Eliot said once that you cannot understand James' quality of horror without knowing Hawthorne, he extended both background and foreground by remarking that both Judge John Hathorne and his own first American ancestor, Andrew Eliot, had been among the witch hangers" (341-42). Andrew Eliot (1627-1703) emigrated from East Coker to colonial Salem, Massachusetts, in 1669 and became one of the judges, together with an ancestor of Hawthorne, who sentenced nineteen witches to death by hanging in the Salem witchcraft trials in 1692. In

that year, he confessed and signed a declaration that he had been deluded and acted on insufficient evidence.

57. On 18 Jan 1927, TSE wrote to Herbert Read that to him Henry James "is especially difficult because to me he seems *not wholly conscious*. There is something bigger there, of which he is hardly aware, than 'civilisation' & its 'complexities.' In some ways he seems to me, as a conscious person, a child: which is perhaps why I like some of his poorer stuff better than his best; in his poorer stuff something bigger appears without his knowing it – e.g. I like especially 'The Altar of the Dead' & "The Friends of the Friends'" (*L3* 378). Two days later he wrote again: "I speak with diffidence about James. I mean partly that he directed to the intensification of social values feeling which is properly religious, so that part of his work has to be interpreted & given a sense he would not [have] admitted himself. I feel that the *Vita Nuova* is more 'conscious' than 'The Friends of the Friends' or 'The Altar of the Dead'" (*L3* 387).

58. Edgar Allan Poe's romantic horror story "The Assignation" (1834) takes place over a night and a morning in Venice.

59. In TSE's "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar," the epigraph comprises fragmented phrases related to works in or about Venice, including a phrase from Robert Browning's "A Toccata of Galuppi's" ("with such hair too"), referring to the eighteenth-century Venetian composer Baldassare Galuppi.

60. See TSE's discussion of the planes of reality in Chapman and Dostoevski in "A Neglected Aspect of Chapman" (2.548).

61. See TSE's discussion of Dickens's *Bleak House* (1853) and Wilkie Collins's *Armadale* (1866) in "Wilkie Collins and Dickens" and in the introduction to *The Moonstone* (3.164, 3.356).

62. *reprendre son bien*: to regain its position

63. Richards writes in *Science and Poetry* (New York: Norton, 1926): "Mr. De la Mare takes shelter in the dream-world of the child, Mr. Yeats . . . into black velvet curtains and the visions of the Hermetist . . . Now he turns to a world of symbolic phantasmagoria about which he is desperately uncertain. He is uncertain because he has adopted as a technique of inspiration the use of trance, of dissociated phases of consciousness, and the revelations given in these dissociated states are insufficiently connected with normal experience. This, in part, explains the weakness of Mr. Yeats' transcendental poetry" (85-87). Walter de la Mare (1873-1956), English poet, short story writer, and novelist.

64. TSE's citations below are from Yeats's *Autobiographies: Reveries over Childhood and Youth and The Trembling of the Veil* (London: Macmillan, 1926); reviewed in the *Criterion* of June 1927 (353-56) by Hamish Miles.

65. TSE's text for citing the pagination of Yeats's "Magic" and other essays is *Essays* (New York: Macmillan, 1924).

66. TSE cites a passage from Book I of Yeats's *The Wanderings of Usheen* (1889), included at the end of the early poems (The Rose and Crossways) collected in *Poems* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1927), 241-345.

67. TSE cites poems and pagination from Yeats's *Selected Poems* (New York: Macmillan, 1921).

68. William Empson criticized Yeats's "Who Goes with Fergus?" in *Seven Types of Ambiguity* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1930), using it to illustrate the sixth type of ambiguity, under the heading "irrelevant statements, if any" (238).

69. TSE cites the pagination of "The White Birds" and "To Ireland in the Coming Times" from *Early Poems and Stories* (London: Macmillan, 1925).

70. Yeats's title poem, "The Tower," first published by TSE in the *Criterion* of June 1927 (287-93) before *The Tower* volume appeared in 1928.

71. Noel Coward's play *Cavalcade* (1931) provides a patriotic portrait of the British middle-class Marryott family over three decades of historic events from 1900 to 1929. With a cast of 400, the spectacular production premiered on the large stage of the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane. The film adaptation premiered in New York in Apr 1933 and won the Academy Award for best picture that year.

72. TSE refers to F. M. Cornford's *The Origin of Attic Tragedy* (1914), which he mentions in "The Interpretation of Primitive Ritual" (1.114) and "The Beating of a Drum" (2.471).

73. TSE cites the play from Lady Gregory's *Seven Short Plays* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1923).

74. The essay is "Preface to the First Edition of *The Well of the Saints*."

75. Joyce's *Anna Livia Plurabelle*, which concluded the first section of *Work in Progress*, was published in the Faber Criterion Miscellany series, No. 15 (1930).

76. TSE cites the pagination of *The Playboy* from Synge's *Plays* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1929).

77. In his "Commentary" on censorship in the *Criterion* of Dec 1928 (3.534) TSE cites Yeats's article on "The Irish Censorship" in the *Spectator*, 5231 (29 Sept 1928), in which Yeats continued his exposé of the Christian Brothers, who brought charges of blasphemy against the publication of the Cherry Tree Carol. One of the Brothers, Yeats reports, "publicly burnt an English magazine because it contained the Cherry Tree Carol, the lovely celebration of Mary's sanctity and her Child's divinity, a glory of the medieval church as popular in Gaelic as in English, because . . . he believed it the work of some irreligious modern poet; and . . . directed his society to base an appeal for public support" of its suppression. Rpt. in *Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats*, vol 2, 480-85; here 481.

78. TSE cites a passage from "Mr. Yeats' opening Speech in the Debate on February 4, 1907, at the Abbey Theatre," in *Plays and Controversies* (London: Macmillan, 1923), 195. *The Countess Cathleen* (1892) and *Four Plays for Dancers* (1921) are included in the volume.

79. Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well* and other plays were influenced by *Noh; or, Accomplishment: A Study of the Classical Stage of Japan* (1916), by Ernest Fenollosa and Ezra Pound; see TSE's review, "The Noh and the Image" (1.564). Yeats then wrote "Certain Noble Plays of Japan" as an introduction to the Cuala Press edition of the same title, including three of Fenollosa's translations, "Chosen and Finished by Ezra Pound" (1916); rpt. *Essays*, 273-93.

80. TSE and Pound attended the first performance of Yeats's *At the Hawk's Well*, starring the Japanese dancer Michio Itow (1892-1961), in Lady Cunard's drawing room on 2 Apr 1916.

81. The first version of *The Resurrection* appeared in the *Adelphi* in June 1927, the rewritten version in *Michael Robartes and the Dancer* (1931).

82. Richards states that in de la Mare's poetry "no intimation of the contemporary situation sounds. He is writing of, and from, a world which knows nothing of these difficulties, a world of pure phantasy for which the distinction between knowledge and feeling has not yet dawned. . . . His utterance . . . voices instead an impulse to . . . seek shelter in the warmth of his own familiar thickets of dreams, not to stay out in the wind" (*Science and Poetry*, 83-84); see n.63 above.

83. Heinrich Heine remained in Paris during the cholera epidemic of 1832 and chronicled the self-interest behavior of social classes in a passage of his journalism collected in *Französische Zustände* [*Conditions in France*] (1833).

84. Ralph Hodgson's "The Bull" and "The Song of Honour," both published separately in 1913, were included in the second volume of *Georgian Poetry: 1913-1915*. TSE quotes lines from "The Bull" in "Reflections on Contemporary Poetry, I" (1:575). See TSE's review of *Georgian Poetry: 1916-1917*: "In Georgian poetry there is almost no crossing visible; it is inbred" (1:679).

85. In his 1933 introduction to *The Collected Poems of Harold Monro*, TSE stated that from a historical point of view "we should see him isolated between the 'Georgian' poets of one decade and the more 'modern' poets of another" (4.522).

86. TSE quotes from Hulme's poems in "Reflections on *Vers Libre*" (1.511).

87. F. S. Flint developed versification that he called "unrimed cadence" in two volumes, *Cadences* (1915) and *Otherword: Cadences* (1920).

88. In "Romanticism and Classicism," *Speculations* (London: Kegan Paul, 1924): "I have still to show that in the verse which is to come, fancy will be the necessary weapon of the classical school. . . . Fancy is not mere decoration added on to plain speech. Plain speech is essentially inaccurate. It is only by new metaphors, that is, by fancy, that it can be made precise" (137).

89. The citation of Pound's poems and pagination is from TSE's edition of and introduction to *Ezra Pound: Selected Poems* (London: Faber & Gwyer, 1928).

90. TSE uses the American edition of Pound's *A Draft of XXX Cantos* (New York: Farrar and Rinehart, 1933), published on 15 Mar; the Faber edition was not published until 14 Sept. TSE had received an advance copy: when Ford Madox Ford learned that Farrar and Rinehart were to publish the volume, he had the firm produce a pamphlet, *The Cantos of Ezra Pound: Some Testimonies*, for gratis distribution on publication. TSE's contribution is dated 1 Dec 1932 (4.506).

91. *Conquistador* (1932), a long poem by American poet Archibald MacLeish (1892-1982), was reviewed in the *Criterion* of July 1932 by F. S. Flint: "Mr. MacLeish is vigorous. . . . In short, Mr. MacLeish has a style. Many of his English competitors have only recollections and literary training" (688). On 5 Apr 1933, TSE wrote facetiously to Pound in the Brer Rabbitt dialect used in their letters: "I have waxen tired proving to my Boys here that McLeesh is a feeble imitation of Cantoes, and reading to them Mauberley, & Damn you."

92. TSE refers to Yeats's attempt to explain the structure of Pound's "immense poem" in *A Packet for Ezra Pound* (Dublin: Cuala Press, 1929): "I have often found there brightly printed kings, queens, knaves, but have never discovered why all the suits could not be dealt out in some quite different order. Now at last he explains that it will, when the hundredth canto is finished, display a structure like that of a Bach Fugue. There will be no plot, no chronicle of events, no logic of discourse, but two themes, the Descent into Hades from Homer, a Metamorphosis from Ovid, and, mixed with these, mediaeval or modern historical characters" (2).

93. Pound's friend from Paris days, Fritz R. Vanderpyl (1876-1965), Belgian poet, novelist, and art critic of *Le Petit Parisien*: "That, Fritz, is the era, to-day against the past, / 'Contemporary.'" TSE wrote to Sydney Schiff on 22 Aug 1920, with a sketch of those attending: "dined with Joyce in Paris . . . Fritz Vanderpyl, a friend of Pound and myself, was also present" (*L1* 494).

94. G. F. Leahy, SJ (1897-1982), *Gerard Manley Hopkins* (1930), a biography, reviewed by Herbert Read in the *Criterion* of Apr 1931 (552-59).

95. TSE cites the pagination of Hopkins's prose and poems from his personal copy, with bookplate and pencil marginalia, of *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. Robert Bridges, 2nd edn (London: Oxford UP, 1930).

96. Marcel Proust's "À propos de Baudelaire: Lettre à Jacques Rivière" first appeared in the *NRF* in June 1921; trans. John Sturrock as "Concerning Baudelaire" in *Against Sainte-Beuve and Other Essays* (Penguin, 1988), 286-309.

97. Hopkins writes of Milton and Counterpoint Rhythm in the "Author's Preface": "Of this kind of verse Milton is the great master and the choruses of *Samson Agonistes* are written throughout in it – but with the disadvantage that he does not let the reader clearly know what the ground-rhythm is meant to be and so they have struck most readers as merely irregular" (3).

98. TSE refers to Hopkins's statement in the concluding paragraph of the "Author's Preface": "But nevertheless in spite of all this and though Greek and Latin lyric verse, which is well known, and the old English verse seen in *Pierce Ploughman* are in sprung rhythm, it has in fact ceased to be used since the Elizabethan age" (6).

99. TSE quotes from Read's *Form in Modern Poetry* (London: Sheed & Ward, 1932): "All art originates in an act of intuition, or vision. . . . The *process* of poetry consists firstly in maintaining this vision in its integrity, and secondly in expressing this vision in words. . . . They are arranged or composed in a sequence or rhythm which is sustained until the mental state of tension in the poet is exhausted or released . . . Historically . . . this theory of poetry is illustrated by the main tradition of English poetry which begins with Chaucer and reaches its final culmination in Shakespeare. . . . It was re-established . . . in our own day by poets like . . . Ezra Pound and T. S. Eliot" (39-41).

TSE also draws on Read's book here and in his Norton and Page-Barbour lectures. In seeking to define the nature of personality in poetry, Read challenges TSE's "notion of personality" as vague: "We cannot hope to arrive at a definition of personality without encroaching to some extent on the notion of psychology. . . . this is where I take my stand, even against my best friends in criticism, such as Mr. Eliot himself" (8).

100. See TSE's mention of John Paul Jones's sea-fight from Whitman's *Song of Myself* in "The Development of Taste in Poetry" (4.834).

101. This lecture was held on 11 Apr. TSE's previous lecture on Hopkins on 30 Mar was followed by the Harvard spring break until 9 Apr.

102. Read quotes from Dryden's Introductory Letter to *Annus Mirabilis*: "The Composition of all poems is or ought to be of wit; and wit in the Poet, or *Wit writing* . . . is no other than the faculty of imagination in the Writer."

103. See TSE's quotation from and commentary on Benlowes's "Theophilia" in his fourth Clark lecture (2.682).

104. TSE cites the title as printed in John Skelton's *Poems* (London: William Heinemann, 1924), 7.

105. TSE cites the titles and pagination from *The Poems of William Dunbar*, ed. W. Mackay Mackenzie (London: Faber and Faber, 1932).

106. TSE refers to the penultimate page of "Cyril Tourneur" in the American edition of his *Selected Essays* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1932), where he illustrates the versification of *The Revenger's Tragedy* and concludes: "The versification . . . is not that of the last period of the great drama. Although so peculiar, the metric of Tourneur is earlier in style than that of the later

Shakespeare, or Fletcher, or Ford. . . . What gives Tourneur his place as a great poet in this one play, in which a horror of life, singular in his own or any age, finds exactly the right words and the right rhythms" (169).

107. TSE's "Triumphal March" was first published in Faber's Ariel Poems series in Oct 1931.

108. Read writes: "It was with the school which Hulme started and Pound established that the revolution begun by Wordsworth was finally completed. Diction, rhythm and metre were fully emancipated from formal artifice, and the poet was free to act creatively under laws of his own origination. . . . the theory is right, and all true poetry of to-day, as all true poetry of the past, conforms to it" (55).

109. TSE had translated Saint-John Perse's long poem *Anabase* (1924) in a French-English edition, *Anabasis: A Poem by St.-J. Perse* (London: Faber and Faber, 1930), writing in the Preface: "I believe that this is a piece of writing of the same importance as the later work of Mr. James Joyce, as valuable as *Anna Livia Plurabelle*. And this is a high estimate indeed" (10).

The Orators: An English Study, a long poem by W. H. Auden (1907-1973), was published by Faber in 1932. TSE wrote to Auden on 11 May 1931 after his first reading: "I have read The Orators with great interest. . . . My chief objection to it is that it seems to me to have lumps of undigested St. Jean Perse embedded in it. I admire your success with the Perse method, which I should not have believed possible, but I think it still needs a further process of purification" (*L5* 568).

110. See the concluding report of TSE's reconstructed lecture on "The Tendency of Some Modern Poetry": "Young poets are now going back to earlier English and Scottish poetry – that of Skelton and Dunbar for example" (4.842).

111. TSE published Auden's *Paid on Both Sides: A Charade* in the *Criterion* of Jan 1930 (268-90); it subsequently appeared in the Faber publication of Auden's *Poems* (1930).

112. Auden's "Ode to John Warner," dedicated to the infant son of Rex and Frances Warner, is the fourth ode included in *The Orators* (1932). It portrays him as a mock-heroic savior of England: "John, son of Warner, shall rescue you."

113. Ronald Bottrall (1906-89), poet, author of *The Loosening and Other Poems* (1931). In an interview titled "His Big Four" in the *New York Times* of 24 Apr 1933, the interviewer reported: "Of the promising young English poets Mr. Eliot names four – W. H. Auden, Stephen Spender, Louis MacNeice, Ronald Bottrall." TSE had accepted Bottrall's poem, "Festivals of Fire, Section II" for publication in the *Criterion* of Oct 1933 (74-77).

114. An allusion to Murry's *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence* (1931), which TSE reviewed in the *Criterion* of July 1931: "It is so well done that it gives me the creeps: probably these matters matter no longer to Lawrence himself; but any author still living might shudder to think of the possibility of such a book of destructive criticism being written about him after he is dead" (4.313).

115. Joyce's *Dubliners* (fifteen stories) and Lawrence's *The Prussian Officer and Other Stories* (twelve stories) were both published in 1914. TSE cites the stories and pagination in the 1914 edition of *The Prussian Officer* (London: Duckworth).

116. TSE discusses these three stories in his second Page-Barbour lecture at Virginia: "I happened to read all of these three stories in rapid succession during the course of some recent work at Harvard. . . . all turn on the same theme of disillusion. In Miss Mansfield's story a wife is disillusioned about her relations with her husband; in the others a husband is disillusioned

about his relations with his wife. . . .What is interesting in the three together is the differences of moral implication" (*ASG* 35).

117. Philip Ira Barber (b. 1911), class of 1933, and Charles Friedman Haas (b. 1913), class of 1935, were honor students in English 26.

118. During the dialogue of Anne and Frances, Anne sadistically kills a mole, to which TSE refers below as "That mole" (n.144).

119. In "The Shades of Spring" a married Addy Syson returns to the farm of Hilda Millership to discover that his former love is in an intimate relationship with Arthur Pilbeam, the gamekeeper.

120. The reference is to TSE's citation of F. H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality* (1893) in the note to line 411 in *The Waste Land*, on page 118 of the first American edition of *Poems 1909-1925* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1932).

121. TSE cites the pagination of *A Portrait of the Artist* either from the Egoist Press edition (London: 1916) or from the B. W. Huebsch edition (New York: 1916), the pagination of *Sons and Lovers* from the Boni and Liveright edition (New York: 1922).

122. Paul Elmer More's essay, "Proust: The Two Ways," had appeared in the first number of *The American Review*, 1 (Apr 1933), 50-75. "There is something portentous in the life of Marcel Proust," the long essay begins: "something portentous in the vast work of fiction into which his life was poured; something equally portentous in the kind of homage given to that work by admirers, many of whom have read but a small portion of it" (50).

123. "At the edge of the wood the bluebells had flowed over into the field and stood there like flood-water. But they were fading now. Clara strayed up to them. He wandered after her. The bluebells pleased him" (281).

124. TSE refers to one of Stephen's romantic premonitions of encountering reality in chapter II, fueled by his reading of Dumas's *The Count of Monte Cristo*: "The figure of that dark avenger stood forth in his mind for whatever he had heard or divined in childhood of the strange and terrible. At night he built up on the parlour table an image of the wonderful island cave . . . When he had broken up this scenery . . . there would come to his mind the bright picture of Marseilles, or sunny trellises and of Mercedes."

125. The Congregational Church grew out of a seventeenth-century English movement that defined itself as an evangelical, Bible-oriented, Noncomformist, Protestant denomination in which each member church is self-governing.

126. See TSE's "Shakespeare and the Stoicism of Seneca," in which he describes Marlowe as "the most thoughtful, the most blasphemous (and therefore, probably, the most Christian) of his contemporaries" (3.251), and "A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry," in which one of his discussants says, "It is only the irreligious who are shocked by blasphemy. Blasphemy is a sign of Faith. Imagine Mr. Shaw blaspheming! He could not" (3.399).

127. Murry's third novel, *The Voyage* (1924), was reviewed in the *Criterion* of July 1924 by F. M. [Vivien Eliot], who asserts that "not one of the characters has a normal or adult reaction to anything or anybody" (485). TSE concludes his review of Murry's *Son of Woman: The Story of D. H. Lawrence* in the *Criterion* of July 1931: "A fateful influence [Lawrence] must have been upon those who experience his power; I cannot help wondering whether Mr. Murry was not compelled to write this book in order to expel the demon from himself; and if so, I wonder whether Mr. Murry has succeeded" (4.318).

128. Toward the end of chapter IV Stephen has an epiphanic vision of a girl in "the likeness of a strange and beautiful sea-bird," leading him to cry out, "Heavenly joy!" For some readers this passage recalls a scene in the *Vita nuova* in which Dante has his first glimpse of Beatrice, his artistic and spiritual muse.

129. Lawrence writes hesitantly to his friend and literary adviser Edward Garnett on 23 Apr 1912: "I want to come to the Cearne on Saturday with Mrs. [Frieda Weekley]. I am most awfully fond of her. Things are getting difficult. Are you *quite* sure you would like her and me to come to your house? . . . We should go away on Sunday. But don't mind to say 'No,' if you feel the least hesitating" (34). He writes to Ernest Collings on 17 June 1913: "It is hopeless for me to try to do anything without I have a woman at the back of me. . . . I daren't sit in the world without a woman behind me. . . . But a woman that I love sort of keeps me in direct communication with the unknown, in which otherwise I am a bit lost" (93-94).

130. After the publication of *Ulysses* in 1922, Joyce worked for the next seventeen years on a novel that appeared serially and in pamphlet form under the general title "Fragments from *Work in Progress*," before it was published by Faber as *Finnegans Wake* in 1939.

TSE wrote to Paul Elmer More on Tuesday, 25 Apr 1933: "today I lectured twice (once to the male, once to the female college) on Joyce. The best paper offered in my course (English 26b) was on Virginia Woolf."

131. See *James Joyce's Ulysses* (Faber, 1930) by the English scholar Stuart Gilbert (1883-1969), and German critic E. R. Curtius's "James Joyce and his Ulysses" (1929), collected in the 2nd edn of *Kritische Essays zur europäischen Literatur* (1954), trans. Michael Kowal as *Essays on European Literature* (1973) (327-54).

132. Joyce acknowledged his debt to Édouard Dujardin (1861-1949), author of *Les lauriers sont coupés* [*The Bays Are Sere*] (1888), one of the first experiments in the stream of consciousness technique.

133. TSE's citations of pagination in *Ulysses* (Paris: Shakespeare and Company), concur with the fourth (1923) to eighth (1926) printings of the Shakespeare editions.

134. In *James Joyce's Ulysses*, Gilbert illustrates diagrammatically how the chapter-by-chapter framework of *Ulysses* corresponds to the *Odyssey* of Homer.

135. TSE quotes from young Stephen Dedalus's historical thought as he becomes ill in chapter I of *Portrait*: "Leicester Abbey lit up. Wolsey died there. The abbots buried him themselves" (19).

136. Joyce's *Haveth Childers Everywhere: Fragment of Work in Progress*, first published in Paris and New York in 1930, was published in the Criterion Miscellany Series by Faber in 1931; it became the final part of chapter 3, book III of *Finnegans Wake*.

137. TSE's first response to the reception, literary merit, and censorship of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* (1928) appeared in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Sept 1928 (3.473).

138. Not Shelley's lines. TSE conflates lines from stanza 6 of Coleridge's "Devil's Thoughts" ("And the devil did grin, for his darling sin / Is pride that apes humility") with stanza 8 of Southey's "The Devil's Walk" ("And he owned with a grin, / That his favourite sin / Is pride that apes humility."

139. Thomas MacGreevy's "The Catholic Element in *Work in Progress*" appeared in the Faber collection of essays, *Our Exagmination round his Factification for Incamination of Work in Progress* (1929) (117-27). A reviewer for the *Criterion*, McGreevy published his *T. S. Eliot: A Study* in 1931.

140. Murry wrote in his review of *Ulysses* in the *Nation and Athenaeum*, 31 (22 Apr 1922): "In what seems to us the most masterly part of the book, a manifestation of a really rare creativeness, Mr. Joyce stages a kind of Walpurgisnacht of his chief characters. . . . In this part of *Ulysses* . . . a genius of the very highest order, strictly comparable to Goethe's or Dostoevsky's, is evident" (124-25).

141. TSE was introducted to Ralph Hodgson by Ottoline Morrell in Dec 1931; during the next nine months, they became fast friends, sharing dinner on numerous occasions and leading to TSE's poem "Lines to Ralph Hodgson Esqre." in the *Criterion* of Jan 1933: "How delightful to meet Mr. Hodgson! / Who is worshipped by all waitresses (They regard him as something apart)" (*CPP* 136). Hodgson's view of the mind attributed to him by TSE is not evident in his poems or writings; the reference is likely based on their previous conversations, similar to those with William Rothenstein, who found that Hodgson's "contempt for the dishonesties and pretences of writers was withering" and that he spoke freely of "the lovely and evil doings of men" (*Men and Memories*, published by Faber in 1932, 352).

142. "Asperges me, Domine, hyssopo et mundabor" ["Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean"] from Psalm 51:7, the Latin hymn intoned during the sprinkling of the congregation with holy water before the Mass.

143. TSE refers to Auden's "Journal of an Airman," Book II of *The Orators: An English Study*.

144. TSE appears to misremember the title of Lawrence's "Second Best," previously discussed (n.118), in which Anne sadistically kills a mole.

145. Lady Cynthia Asquith (1887-1960), editor, war diarist, and author of ghost stories, also wrote on the British Royal family, including a biography, *The Duchess of York* (1927). After they met in 1913, she and Lawrence became friends and correspondents; he depicted her in several of his stories.

146. TSE refers again to Lawrence's letter of 23 Apr 1913 to Garnett (n.129 above), identifying Mrs. Frieda Weekley, whose name is omitted in the edition, as Frieda, Baroness von Richthofen (1879-1956), daughter of the German aristocrat Baron Friedrich von Richthofen. At that time, Frieda was in divorce proceedings with Ernest Weekley, Lawrence's former teacher, prior to eloping with Lawrence in July 1914.

147. The music hall, stage, and radio comedian Billy Bennett (1887-1942) was billed as "Almost a Gentleman" and appeared in a short film by that title in 1928. He interrupted his career with military service during World War I, receiving the Distinguished Conduct Medal, the Military Medal, and the Belgian Croix de guerre.

148. TSE's further defense of Radclyffe Hall's *The Well of Loneliness* – against the censorship brought by Home Secretary William Joynson-Hicks ("Jix") – appears in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Oct 1929, in which he also defends Lawrence's paintings against censorship (3.746).

149. Lawrence writes in chapter VI, "First Glimmerings of the Mind," *Fantasia of the Unconscious* (New York: Thomas Seltzer, 1922): "Let all schools be closed at once. Keep only a few technical training establishments, nothing more. Let humanity lie fallow, for two generations at least. Let no child learn to read, unless it learns by itself, out of its own individual persistent desire" (87). He then offers "a new conception of education. Education means leading out the individual nature in each man and woman to its true fullness. . . . For the mass of people,

knowledge *must* be symbolical, mythical, dynamic. . . . Symbols must be true from top to bottom. But the interpretation of the symbols must rest . . . in the higher, responsible, conscious classes. To *those who cannot divest* themselves again of mental consciousness and definite ideas, mentality and ideas are death, nails through their hands and feet" (99-100).

150. Lawrence wrote to Edward Garnett on 17 Apr 1913: "I can only write what I feel pretty strongly about: and that, at present, is the relation between men and women. After all, it is *the* problem of to-day, the establishment of a new relation, or the readjustment of the old one, between men and women" (*Letters*, 118).

151. The lecture title alludes to Wallace Stevens's poem, "The Emperor of Ice Cream," from *Harmonium* (1922): "Let be be finale of seem / The only emperor is the emperor of ice cream." The poem originally appeared in the *Dial* in 1922.

152. Dominic Bevan Wyndham Lewis, humor columnist, journalist, biographer, and editor of *The Stuffed Owl: An Anthology of Bad Verse* (1930); see 3.597, n.5; Diabolus Benedicat: May the devil bless.

153. Hugh Gordon Porteus (1906-93), art and literary critic and regular reviewer for the *Criterion*, published the first book on Lewis, *Wyndham Lewis: A Discursive Exposition* (1932).

154. In 1914-15, Lewis published the first two issues of *Blast*, in the second of which (July 1915) TSE published "Preludes" and "Rhapsody on a Windy Night." See his two reviews of *Tarr* (1918) in "Contemporanea" (1.718) and "TARR" (1.745). His citations from *Tarr* below are also from the Egoist Press edition of 1918.

155. In 1909-10, TSE studied the Florentine paintings of the Pollaiuolo brothers, Antonio (1431-96) and Piero (1443-96), at Harvard in English 20b, "Renaissance Painters"; in his lecture notes (King's), he compared Piero's "muscular executions" to those of his teacher, Andrea del Castagno. Katsushika Hokusai, Japanese artist, ukiyo-e painter, printmaker; TSE refers to the prints of Hokusai's contemporaries, Utamaro and Toyokuni, in "The Borderland of Prose" (1.537).

156. TSE published "The Apes of God," from Lewis's novel in progress, in the *Criterion* of Apr 1924 (300-10). Subtitled "Extract from Encyclical Addressed to Daniel Boleyn by Mr. Zagreus," it had been preceded by Lewis's "Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man" in the *Criterion* of Feb 1924 (124-42). In the latter, Lewis writes a scathing criticism of the "Apes of God," "the prosperous mountebanks who alternately imitate and mock at and traduce those figures they at once admire and hate. . . . Its members consist of moneyed descendants of Victorian literary splendor . . . Where they approximate to the citizens of this new Bohemia is in their substitution . . . of money for talent as a qualification . . . and in the tone of 'society,' of an affectation of social elegance, prevailing among them" (307). TSE wrote to Lewis on 19 Mar 1924 about the two parts: "You have surpassed yourself and everything. It is worthwhile running the *Criterion* just to publish these" (*L2* 344). In *The Apes of God: A Novel* (1930), "The Apes of God" corresponds to Part III, "Mr. Zagreus and the Split-Man" to Part IX.

TSE wrote to Sydney Schiff on 6 Apr 1924 to describe the reproach he had received for publishing "The Apes of God": "Had I been in London, I do not imagine that there would have been such a hue and cry set up about it. In fact, my absence from London at this moment has given the most excellent opportunity to all those people who bear me a grudge . . . to gather together and vent their spleen in a cause which, being impersonal,will seem to them to conceal their personal malice. In short, I have played into the hands of all my London 'friends' and given them an opportunity to display the hostility to the *Criterion* which without exception they have most obviously felt since it first made its appearance" (*L2* 356-57).

157. TSE hosted a lunch for his students on 12 June.

TEXTUAL NOTES FOR ENGLISH 26

Location: Houghton Library: holograph lecture notes (MS Am 1691.14 (36); 92 sheets: 90 on light yellow paper with light blue rule, 20.1 x 25.4 cm; pages 75-76 on white unruled paper torn from bound MS book; one page missing after page 76; no watermarks. The TS transcription, with omissions and misreadings, is in the Harvard University Archives (HUC 8932.224.26). Abbreviated words, names, and titles have been expanded; inconsistent punctuation of titles standardized for clarity of genre.

Theodore Spencer entered in light pencil the subject for most of the Tuesday-Thursday and occasional Saturday lectures in his 1933 date book (Harvard Archives: HUG 4806.5, Box 5): 7 Feb: Background; 9 Feb: Pater and Wilde; 16 Feb: Kipling, etc.; 18 Feb (Sat), Eng 26; 21 Feb: James; 28 Feb and 2 Mar: Hardy; 7 and 9 Mar: Conrad; 14 Mar: Dowson, etc.; 16 Mar: Yeats; 18 Mar (Sat), Symbolism in Poetry; 21and 23 Mar: Anglo-American; 28 Mar: War Poetry; 30 Mar: Hopkins; 1-9 Apr: Spring vacation; 11 Apr: [Robert] Bridges [Hopkins and others]; 13 Apr: Bloomsbury; 18 Apr: Joyce; 20 Apr: Joyce, Lawrence; 25 and 27 Apr: Joyce; 2 May: Contemporary criticism; 4 May, Verse of the future; 8 May: Reading period; 9 June, Final Exam; 12 June, Eliot lunch.

The list of reserved books (author-title only) and the final examination for the course are reproduced by A. Stuart Daley, "Eliot's English 26," *T. S. Eliot Review*, 2.2 (Fall 1975), 5-7.

The Modern Dilemma[1]

The Christian Register (Boston), 102 (19 Oct 1933) [675]-676

Several years ago, at the end of a pamphlet on the last Lambeth Conference, I wrote the words: "The world is trying the experiment of attempting to form a civilized but non-Christian mentality. The experiment will fail; but we must be very patient in awaiting its collapse; meanwhile redeeming the time so that the Faith may be preserved alive through the dark ages before us; to renew and rebuild civilization, and save the world from suicide."[2]

It has struck me since that these words, and the paragraph from which they are taken, must have impressed a good many readers as merely a rather rhetorical flourish in concluding a rather polemical pamphlet. During the last fifteen years or so we have become so accustomed to gloomy predictions of the future of civilization that we take them as a matter of course, or as a pleasant opiate. But my prediction differed from other predictions by being really a statement of what is already a fact. What I expect to happen in the future is merely the sort of thing that will make more evident that what I predict has already happened. It is quite possible that we are at the beginning of the Dark Ages. In the last three or four hundred years we have passed through successive stages of schism, heresy, and toleration. Possibly the age of toleration is coming to an end, and we may be again approaching a period in which Christians in Western Europe and America will be persecuted. I hardly expect so much as that: life will simply be made more and more inconvenient for them. Christians will not be persecuted until they are feared; and they will not be feared until they are powerful. They may, for the efficient regiment of the state, be segregated into ghettos; but they will probably be tolerated on the assumption that they are a dying race for some time to come.

Meanwhile, the intermediate stages between Christianity will, I believe, tend to disappear, and it is well that they should disappear. The future will be black and white. That is, however, a slow process; the humanitarians, the sentimentalists, the conservatives, and the fundamentalists are tenacious of life. But amongst the more intelligent, and in the main centers of activity, I think it is no exaggeration to say that men and women tend to be either more orthodox or else do not pretend to be Christians at all. It is still premature to conjecture on what lines the amorphous body of non-Christians will organize itself; and it is difficult to conceive what their minds will be like. Many of the most charming and congenial persons I know are atheists (they may call themselves agnostics). But they are either the children, or grandchildren, or at most the great-grandchildren, of professing Christians; their religious inheritance is involved with their social inheritance, their "class" values, their social and financial position, their notions of correct behavior, however debased. Their agnosticism represents a transitional stage, as broadmindedness and tolerance on any large scale are transitional. Their great-grandchildren will probably find themselves with some positive belief; and this belief will either be for Christianity or against it.

I am sure that it is only in its complete form that Christianity will survive at all – though some of us may disagree at present as to what this completeness comprehends. The lingering political importance of Protestantism, in Britain, northern Europe, and America, is an importance of democratic numbers rather than of intellectual activity and leadership; and democratic numbers themselves seem to become less powerful than they were. I do not, of course, present this forecast as offering an argument in favor of Catholicism; arguments are concerned with its *truth*, not with the probable consequences of failing to support it, however disastrous those consequences may be. Nor am I manipulating the political bogey of Communism.[3] Most people's prejudices against Communism are no better founded than other people's prejudices in its favor. Communism is, at any rate, something with which the Catholic can have a kind of sympathy. It does aim at something. To the liberal, Communism finds a mythical value in something called society or humanity, and Catholicism finds a mythical value in something called the individual soul. It is true that Communism does not make much of the Christian virtue of chastity, but I cannot see why anyone who is not a Christian should attach much importance to chastity; and Communism does not make much of the virtue of humility – but that is either a Christian virtue or it is not a virtue at all; on the other hand it exalts, in common with the monastic orders, the virtues of poverty and obedience. The actual order has merely made poverty a badge of shame, and for obedience it has substituted economic pressure. And the Catholic should be too dissatisfied with the world as it is to be afraid of change in itself; nor does he *expect* a great deal of the world at any time, though his *demands* be severe. He is not interested in degrees.

I cannot draw the distinction between the Catholic and the conservative – who is usually confused as to what he wants to conserve – more easily than in the matter of morality, or sin. The conservative is concerned, not so much with moral laws as with habits and conventions; so that the morality of his own generation, or perhaps of that immediately preceding, is his criterion. To many excellent people sexual sin is the most repellent; they can hardly conceive that the sin of pride may be more deadly. They not only conceive "morality" too narrowly, but they care more for morality than for religion; and they fear their natural appetites, but not their natural tendency towards heresy and intellectual error. They may support Christianity – in a degraded form usually – because of a prudential or purely irrational terror of immorality; but that in which they believe is often a morality of custom and prejudice rather than that which Christianity teaches. If I did not believe in something so fundamental as the Incarnation, I should find it difficult to defend the morality which I try to practice.[4]

Accordingly, what gives me concern, in the modern world, is not so much the growth of sexual laxity, or even of financial corruption, as the disappearance of the *sense* of sin. People often talk as if the sense of sin were something invented by a peculiarly gloomy race of fanatics which sprang up suddenly in England and immediately fled to Massachusetts. But the sense of sin is absolutely essential to Christianity, and to Judaism from which it came; and as for Puritanism, there is more genuine Puritanism inside the Catholic Church than outside of it. I am not so much alarmed today at there being so many sinners as I am by there being so many people who feel virtuous. I can hardly think that there was ever a time before when so many people felt virtuous. And when people feel virtuous, civilization totters. It is not the movie stars that are the menace: if, as I dare say is not the case, their standards of morality are unedifying, they are only filling a popular demand. The danger comes from the virtuous and well-intentioned; from the pioneers of Ethical Culture, the World-Leaguers for Sexual Reform, the Utopians, the enthusiastic, the unsophisticated, the self-appointed saints, and the people who will *not* study Latin and Greek.

The real abyss is between those who believe in the supernatural and those who do not; and amongst the latter I class all those who are liberal enough to allow a *little* place for the supernatural. To believe in the supernatural is not simply to believe that after living a successful, material, and fairly virtuous life here one will continue to exist in the best-possible substitute for this world, or that after living a starved and stunted life here one will be compensated with all the good things one has gone without: it is to believe that the supernatural is the greatest reality here and now. We have to make it our source of values and the pattern of our life. It is well put in Harton's *Elements of the Spiritual Life*:

> [I]t is clear that the Christian life is essentially supernatural. It is the ignoring or denying of this element which is the cause of most of the ineffectiveness of present-day religion. Supernatural religion is not popular, but that does not make it untrue. Protestantism dislikes it, the Reformation was largely a movement for its dethronement; Modernism dislikes it – the pathetic desire to find a purely human Christ and the condemnation of sacramental action as "magic" attest as much; Science dislikes it because it appears to the scientist to introduce an incalculable and undemonstrable element into Nature; the Man in the Street dislikes it because it is beyond his comprehension, and it is a common weakness to fear and therefore to hate the unknown; it remains for the Catholic uncompromisingly to nail his colors to the mast and live supernaturally, confident that on that level alone will he find fully Him for Whom his soul thirsts.[5]

As the sense of sin depends upon the supernatural, so from the sense of sin issues the ascetic life. The ascetic ideal is essential to Christianity. The modern world suffers from two great disasters: the decay of the study of Latin and Greek and the dissolution of the monasteries. These defects can be supplied. The benefit of monasticism is not only for those individuals who have the vocation for that life; it is also in the ideal of life that it sets before those whose lives are in the world.[6] For Christian asceticism is a matter of degree; and every life, in so far as it is Christian, is ascetic: in self-abnegation, self-discipline, and the love of God. Exceptional austerities are for exceptional men; for ordinary men, the practice of prayer and meditation and the daily battle against the distractions which the world offers to the mind and the spirit. The ascetic ideal – and asceticism is of course far more than a mere *doing without* – seems to me implied in the Summary of the Law.[7]

We like to interpret the love of our neighbors as ourselves as a vague benevolence, or as practical charity alone. We like to think that as we want to be happy, and have some "right" to be happy, so we must remember that our neighbors have rights too and that we should try to make them happy: the love of our neighbors becomes fair play, and doing the decent thing. But the real love of our neighbor, in and for God, means transcending the bounds of love and benevolence as we know them, and reaching a plane at which what is given is not as the world gives.[8]

In the way in which the modern world uses the terms "human" and "inhuman," there is undoubtedly something "inhuman" about this. As a supernatural religion, Christianity must aim to lead its followers to something above the human – though the last thing a Christian wants to be is a "superman," and the majority of human beings hate and fear any summons to be more than healthy natural human beings.[9] St. Paul, perhaps, was not perfectly "integrated," or his interpretation of *estote perfecti* was not that of Freud. *For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing: for to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good I know not . . . . O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?*[10] We can have no ideal, for human beings, lower than that of saintliness: an ideal which the world repudiates, or reduces to the saintliness of a Santa Claus.[11] We recognize the chasm between the divine and the human, we admit our shortcomings and wrongdoings. "It is not true that we have never been broken: we have been broken upon the wheel."[12] The world insists upon being right. It insists upon being virtuous, it is right, it is virtuous, it is damned.[13]

T. S. ELIOT

NOTES

1. Described by Gallup as a "modified reprint of an address made before a gathering of Unitarian clergymen in Boston" (227), the address was printed simultaneously in *The Christian Leader* (Boston) of 21 Oct 1933 (1326-27), with no textual deviation (TSE was identified as the author of *The Sacred Word* [*sic*]). It is a substantial revision of an unpublished address titled "Two Masters," delivered on 3 Apr to the Boston Association of Unitarian Ministers in King's Chapel, on the invitation of Rev. Harold G. Arnold. "I should be very glad to oblige the Boston Association of Ministers in any way that I can," TSE wrote in reply to the invitation. "I confess, however, that my real difficulty, as, if I may so, a rather fanatical Catholic, is what subject I could talk about to such an Association." He repeated the lecture on 10 Apr for the Clerical Association of Massachusetts in Jamaica Plain. On 18 May he wrote to Paul Elmer More to thank him for his recent letter: "I quoted it (anonymously) to the Clerical Association of Massachusetts (who behaved like a very amiable tar-baby; the Unitarians, on the other hand, did not discuss my paper at all, but attacked me for not being a Papist." TSE's original title is taken from Christ's Sermon on the Mount: "No man can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon" (Matthew 6:24).

2. See "Thoughts after Lambeth" (1931) (4.240-41). TSE alludes to Ephesians 5:15-16: "See, then, that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil."

3. See TSE's previous comparative discussion in "Christianity and Communism" (1932), the first of four broadcasts under the general title of "The Modern Dilemma" (4.422).

4. TSE wrote to More on 10 June 1932 that he "really did not know that you were so unsound on the subject of the Virgin Birth. But I hope to have a discussion on the whole subject of the Incarnation when I see you."

5. Frederic Percy Harton, *The Elements of the Spiritual Life: A Study in Ascetical Theology* (London: S. P. C. K., 1932), 7; a frequently reprinted Anglican guide that draws upon Catholic spiritual directives. The quotation ends with an allusion to an image frequently used in the Psalms. "O God . . . my soul thirsteth for thee, my flesh longeth for thee in a dry and thirsty land, where no water is" (63:1; see also 42:2, 143:6). Harton (1889-1958) was then Warden of the Sisters of Charity, Knowle, Bristol.

6. HWE copied from the original typescript the text of the three previous sentences before TSE modified them here: "I think that the modern world is suffering from two disasters, which together are enough to undermine our civilization: the decay of the study of Latin and Greek in colleges and universities, and the dissolution of the monasteries. It is imperative that the next generation shall see to the restoration of the monastic life in society, especially that of the more contemplative orders. Their value is not only for the work that they do, or for those who have the vocation to join them; it is also for the standard and ideal of life that they set for the layman, as well while he is doing his work in the world as when he uses them for retreat and meditation" Houghton: MS Am 1691 (134a).

7. For "Summary of the Law," see "Catholicism and International Order" (4.545, n.3).

8. TSE alludes to Christ's farewell in parting from the apostles, "my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid" (John 14:27).

9. TSE alludes to Nietzsche's *Human, All Too Human* (1878), a collection of aphorisms denouncing Christianity as anti-human, and *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (1883-91), a novel presenting human beings as the evolutionary link between apes and the Übermensch (Superman).

10. TSE quotes Paul's confession to the Romans (7:18-19, 24) that he has fallen short of the ideal given by Christ in the Sermon on the Mount: *estote ergo vos perfecti*. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). The ego-ideal of Freud's superego provides the ideal of perfection, or an image of the perfect self patterned after parents or people whom it regards as ideal, which the ego strives to attain. TSE uses this Latin phrase in his *Criterion* "Commentary" of Oct 1932 (4.504, n.15).

11. The feast day of 6 Dec for St. Nicholas, the fourth-century saint known for his generosity to the poor and children, is celebrated at Christmas in many countries, in which his sainthood has traditionally devolved into a gift-giving Santa Claus, or St. Nick.

12. From chapter XV, "The Accuser," of G. K. Chesterton's novel *The Man Who Was Thursday: A Nightmare* (1908).

13. The following text is HWE's transcription of the "Closing paragraph" of the typescript of "Two Masters" (Houghton):

> And the suggestion may be added, that the Church, in setting very high standards up to which it must know that the majority of its communicants will not live, is practicing a certain hypocrisy. Would it not be better, people may ask, if the standard set were not that of an

ideal asceticism, but rather that of the highest natural human life; for then, perhaps, more people would live up to it? An unattainable ideal, they may say, makes for dishonesty, and compels laxity in the treatment of the weaker members. Such a criticism, I think, is no more valid than the criticism of celibacy which maintains that celibacy cannot really be the highest life because if it were, the human race ought to come to an end. Perhaps the simplest retort is to ask what is the alternative. What happens when you trim your ideals down to fit the behavior of the nicest people? Instead of compromising practice you have compromised the ideal, and that is a more serious matter. When you think that you are getting rid of hypocrisy, you are merely descending to complacency and self-conceit: an ideal which can be attained is the most dangerous of booby-traps, for its attainment leads to spiritual pride. The Catholic is alone in affirming humility as the greatest and first of the Christian virtues: humility, purity, charity, as Dr. Paul More puts it. And apart from Christianity, humility is not a virtue; it has its significance only in the Christian setting. We must have an ideal so high that measured by it the purest and most devout feels that he is indistinguishable from the greatest sinner. We can have no ideal, for all human beings, lower than that of saintliness – in the exact sense. And this is the ideal which the world has repudiated, as being inhuman. Ideals are inhuman, but we are only human, instead of being animals, by our capacity to transcend humanity. It does not matter, that Christian hierarchs have often proved themselves only petty human beings; it does not matter that ecclesiastical policy has often been politics; it does not matter that the mass of Christians should be lecherous, stupid, brutal, lazy and dirty. What matters is that the mass of humanity, in their naughty as well as their good behavior, confess the true faith, the right ideal, and admit from what path it is that they have erred and strayed like lost sheep, by their own fault, their own most grievous fault. The world, on the contrary, insists on being right. It insists on being virtuous. It is right, it is virtuous, and it is damned. Between the Catholic and the world there can be indefinite compromise on behavior; but there can be no compromise on ideal. There are Two Masters, and each of us has the power of choice. "To whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness." [Romans 6:16]

Address by T. S. Eliot, ’06, to the Class of ’33, June 17, 1933[1]

Milton Graduates Bulletin, 3 (9 Nov 1933) 5-9

Twenty-seven years ago I sat here with the graduating class – not in this hall, we did not seem to need so much room in those days – and somebody then got up on the platform and made the sort of speech that I am supposed to make.[2] At least, I believe some one did. I really do not remember. I have not the slightest recollection who it was or a word that he said, and it never occurred to me even to regret that fact until today. Perhaps if I had attended to his words, I should know better how to behave now, but I do not believe that any other member of my class can remember that speech any better than I can. I do not believe any graduating class ever remembers what the speaker of the day says to it. The reason of this extraordinary and periodic lapse of memory must be that none of us ever listen. There are too many other things to think about at the moment, more pressing and more interesting. The immediate future, the next day, the summer, and the next year at college are all more interesting things to think about than what you hear from some old duffer who gets up on the platform when you are anxious to get away.

That being so, the question is: Whom am I to talk to? The graduating class, if it is true to form, does not listen. Of course, I cannot condescend to anyone else. I can hear what I am saying myself, but you must remember that, differently from twenty-seven years ago, I am now on my best behavior and have to listen. Besides, three of my old masters are present,[3] and you will find yourselves when you come back after a long time that two things strike you about your old masters: one is that they are very much younger than you thought they were, and the other is that they inspire you with very much more awe than they ever did when you were in school.

However, it occurred to me that as I had to talk to somebody, I would take more or less a metaphorical figure and make him as real as I could – that is, it occurred to me to say a few words to the ghost of myself at the age of seventeen or thereabouts, whom we may suppose to be skulking somewhere about this hall. I have always wanted to say something to him and I have a number of grievances against that character.

I should like to face him and say: “Now look at me. See what a mess you have made of things. What have you got to say for yourself?” So I shall begin by saying to him: “Up to now you have contributed something to your own education, but for the most part you have been taught, and from now on you have got to contribute a good deal more to your own education and cooperate, because from now on you won’t learn anything unless to a large extent you are teaching yourself. You have got to find out for yourself what you want to do in the next few years. You must find out what you want to do and whether you are capable of doing it. The probability is assuming that you are neither a rotter nor an absolute weakling – that you belong to one of three general classes of individuals. The first always seemed to me a rather fortunate class of people. They are those who from very early time seem to have developed a very clear bent in a certain direction and, having abilities in that way, it is quite clear what they want to do and what they ought to do for the rest of their lives. A great many of these people, I think, are very often scientifically inclined. They include the fellows who are always six experiments ahead of you in the laboratory – I was always three or four behind with those; I never used to get anything to explode. Their part is not necessarily easy, but it is very plainly marked.

Then there is a large class of people who do not seem to have a particular bent for one thing rather than another, but who, with the aid of character and good nature, family, friends, influence, and so on, get on very well in the world and go on fairly smoothly in a pretty direct line to a very satisfactory career.

Then there is a third class of people who have to find a good deal more out for themselves, who do not seem destined for the straightforward, conventional sort of life. After all, it is the third class of people who are the backbone of a country and who have shown no early evidence of a career in them. Some of them, become noted, some remain obscure; but they are people who have to make their own mistakes, find out for themselves, and for good or ill do their own thinking.

Now, scholarship, of course, has sonic qualities for all of these people, both in bringing out their separate types and individualities and in giving them something in common. It seems to me that one of the things which scholarship has to do is to protect us from over-specialization, from knowing only the thing which we can do better than other people, and being completely ignorant and indifferent about what other people can do and have to do to make the world. Also, on the other hand, it protects us from smattering, from knowing a little about a good many things, but not really being a master of anything; and whatever else scholarship has to give us, it seems to me that it must give us this balanced understanding of things, a mastery of one thing which we do and a sympathetic understanding of others.

Now, just here, I think my ghost, who does not like me any better than I like him, would put in a word and say: "That is all very well, but look at you. You did a great deal of smattering and not enough concentrating, and your career, so-called, has not been a career at all, but just like nothing better than a series of accidents, some of them happy ones, but certainly nothing that you can take credit for."

I am quite willing to admit about smattering. That is why I am such an authority on the subject. I once, very long ago, gave nearly a whole lecture on the subject of ignorance, and my own ignorance in particular. It was very serious, but the audience only laughed at me.

I am perfectly willing to admit also that I have been the victim, sometimes the happy victim, of circumstances. When I first discovered many years ago – and it came rather as a surprise to me – that one did have to earn a living and do something in the world, I first became for a time a schoolmaster. I did learn certainly one thing from trying to teach. I learned to have a great respect for my own teachers when I found out how extraordinarily difficult it was to teach anybody anything. I had to teach a variety of subjects: history – I remember that after a whole term spent with an upper form on Tudor history, nothing else, one of the boys was able to write correctly at the end the names, and in the right order, of all, of Henry the Eighth's wives, but he somewhat diminished the effect by adding very conscientiously, "These are all that I can remember." I also taught, I think, or tried to teach, Latin, French, German, arithmetic, drawing, mental arithmetic – and mental arithmetic in pounds, shillings, and pence is no joke, I can tell you, when you have been brought up on the decimal system – several other subjects, and swimming. I tried to teach some of the smaller boys – this was a school in London – baseball, and they tried to teach me rugby and cricket.[4] I do not know which was the greater failure. Then I came to the conclusion, with a good deal of admiration for those who can do it, that teaching was not a career for me. After all, all I wanted to do was to write poetry, and teaching seemed to take up less time than anything else, but that was a delusion. I assure you it takes all your time, even when you are asleep. I was a house master for three weeks. I cannot think of anything more awful.

Well, I gave that up without a sigh and finally – to the advantage of all the boys, too – I found myself, again entirely by luck and false pretenses, in a bank.[5] The first thing I had to find out was the difference between what you put on the right-hand side of the page and what you put on the left, and not get them mixed up. I made a good many mistakes there. I remember paying for the same consignment of butter and eggs from Denmark three times over by mistake. Of course, little things like that can be set straight. It is true that a few of my academic accomplishments came in play in this career; for instance, the study of Greek was very useful in banking when I had to translate annual reports and balance sheets of Greek[6†] shipping companies. In fact, I rather acquired a reputation as a linguist, but I discovered that that is not always an advantage. I was once asked by one of the really big men in the bank to translate something for him. I looked at it and said, "I am very sorry, sir, but I do not know any Polish." He said, "What! And I understood that you were a linguist."[7]

Then I did more interesting things in time, graduating from the bank and gravitating[8†] toward journalism. In one period we produced a daily newspaper, another man and I, under the title of *Extracts from the Foreign Press*. At the beginning we even set the type ourselves. Later we had two or three typists to dirty their fingers over it instead.

This may seem incredible, but to show you what you can do if you have to, without knowing anything about the subject, for a year or more I contributed monthly articles on the movements of foreign exchange.[9] I really think that sort of thing is easier to do if you know nothing about it. I do not want to disparage any subject, but when I had to write those articles, I can tell you that I was thankful that I never studied economics in college. It would just have been a nuisance, and sometimes I guessed right.

Well, then, by another series of accidents again, merely in the interest of trying to find something which would provide a living and take as little time as possible so that I could write, I became what I am now, a publisher. I do not know whether or not that is a really reputable business to be engaged in, but I cannot help it.

If you want to write poetry, you are, perhaps, outside of all of the classes that I have mentioned, because writing poetry is not a career. It is something to be avoided, and I should say to everybody very seriously: Don't write poetry if you can possibly avoid it. If you want to write poetry, keep away from pencils and paper and typewriters until you have overcome the temptation, because it will do you no good; it will only get you into trouble.

Up to this point I seem to have been getting myself into a weaker and weaker position in dealing with this ghost of mine, whom I had wanted to cow, but I will say to him; I have learned three things in life which I wish you had learned for me. I have had to learn them by hard experience. The first is: Whatever you think, be sure that it is what you think; whatever you want, be sure that it is what you want; whatever you feel, be sure that it is what you feel. It is bad enough to think and want the things that your elders want you to think and want, but it is still worse to think and want just like all your contemporaries. Of course, I do not mean that everybody should go out being[10†] eccentric or just doing things that nobody else is doing. I mean that if you think for yourself, nine times out of ten you will probably be thinking and feeling and acting just like the majority or, at any rate, like a great many other people, but if you think for yourself, there will come some time sooner or later when you have to stand quite alone, and you have to be prepared for that one time, if it is only one, and it may come early and it may come late, but I do not feel that anyone is really an educated man unless he can think for himself, without influence.

Then the second thing is that one finds out in life one has to make a good many choices. Now, most choices you can get over. I mean that if you make the wrong choice, you can rub it out and make the other one, but there are always some choices sooner or later which are irrevocable and, whether you make the right one or the wrong one, there is no going back on it. "Whatever you do," I wish some one had said to me then, "don't whimper, but take the consequences!"

And the third thing which I have learned is this: Don't admire or desire success. Admire and desire the qualities, moral and mental, which go to make success. Admire the end of any successful career, if it has been a good end to pursue, but never admire the success itself. In fact, I sometimes wonder whether there is such a thing as success, except in a safe and mediocre way. It is so very difficult even to distinguish between success and failure.

That reminds me, in closing, of two illustrations of that, which also illustrate the question of courage, two of the bravest acts that I know of. One you will not have heard of, because it happened to a man I know and is not generally known. It is almost an incredible story, but it did happen. This man was in the English army during the War. He happened to have spent a good deal of his childhood and youth in Germany, so that he could talk German like a native. One night on a raid he captured a German officer who was so like him in appearance that he was struck by it himself – almost a double. He took this officer, took his uniform and papers, and he questioned him for two or three days until the man had told him practically everything about himself. Then he put on the uniform and took the papers, and the next dark night when there was a skirmish he slipped over into the German lines.

For three weeks he impersonated this German officer with the officer's mess, talked to them, made friends with them, fought with them, got all the information about the movements of that German division that he could.

In about two or three weeks he made a mistake. The officers one evening were discussing Shakespeare. They were all men of superior education. He made a slip. He quoted Shakespeare in English. Most of them did not take any notice, but one man, a young officer with whom he had made very particular friends and of whom he had become very fond, he could see was suspicious. So he thought he had done all he could; he had better get back to the English lines, if he could, as quickly as possible. The next night or so he was able to manage it – there was a raid and he scurried over – but in order to get back to the English lines he had to shoot the man with whom he had made friends.

He got back, went to his commanding officer and reported, and gave all the information which he had acquired, quite valuable information about the German movements, and then he went out and the officer had him followed and they got him in time and he was six months in a hospital. He is not a man who talks very much; certainly that is one thing he does not talk about. Of course, he would not get a V.C. for that.[11†] It was flagrant disregard of discipline to have done that without permission or command, and he has been a very unhappy man in consequence. I think it is one of the bravest things I have ever heard of, incredibly brave, but from his point of view was that success or failure?

The other instance you will probably know. It is the instance of Captain Oates, who was one of Scott's expedition into the Antarctic. You will remember the party that got off, wandering about in the snow, and nearly ran out of provisions. Scott tells the story in his diary.[12] Oates thought that if there was one less of them to eat, the provisions might hold out until they were recovered. So he said one evening, "I am just going outside and I shall be gone some time," and walked out until he was frozen in the snow. Now, that seems to me a very brave thing to have done, one of the finest things a man could do, but he was not successful. The party was not recovered. After all, it would not have made any difference to the lives or deaths of the others if he had stayed. Still, it was the right thing to do and he saw that one thing. It might, so far as he knew, have been successful. He was right in acting on that chance.

That, it seems to me, is all that any of us can do. It does not really matter whether we succeed or fail in life. That is as it happens, but what does matter is that we should find out the right thing to do and then do it, whether it leads to success or celebrity or obscurity or even to infamy.

NOTES

1. TSE paid a visit to the Milton Academy on 13 Mar when a tea was held for him by the faculty. On that visit, he likely gave his "Chat to English Teachers," the outline of which is included with the English 26 transcription at Harvard (HUC 8932.224.26). On 18 Mar, he wrote to Frank Morley: "Have been asked to make the Prize Day [Commencement] speech at my old school."

TSE wrote on HWE's printed copy after publication: "Evidently taken down in shorthand without my knowledge. It goes wrong here and there!" (Houghton: AC9.El464.LZ999e); however, Milton Academy received "three pages of manuscript notes" (last page missing), consisting of a pencil draft in TSE's hand with some parts in outline form, from the Rev. John Carroll Perkins. The published text may have made use of the shorthand and the draft. TSE's holograph pencil emendations in HWE's copy are marked and recorded in the notes. As he was not involved in preparing or proofing the text, the editors have placed it by the speaking date rather than that of publication.

This was TSE's last lecture in America before he sailed on 24 June aboard the *Tuscania* to Liverpool. On 19 July, he wrote to John Hayward: "I think that I spoke in public (to be comprehensive) between 70 and 80 times, ending with a Prize Day address at my old school – where I believe I surpassed myself" (King's).

2. TSE spent the 1905-06 academic year at the Milton Academy outside Boston. In addition to the partial draft of his address, the Milton Academy archives possess TSE's physics notebook. HWE's correspondence concerning the academy's collection of TSE is in the Houghton.

3. Four Milton masters teaching in 1906 were still on the faculty list in 1933. All were former Milton and Harvard graduates: William L. W. Field, headmaster (1917-42), taught biography and geography; Frank Edwin Lane taught mathematics; Homer Williamson LeSourd taught physics and chemistry; and Frederick Hay Osgood taught French. As TSE's mother requested that French be excluded from his subjects (*L1* 7-8), Osgood may not have been among the three former masters said to be present.

4. After teaching at the High Wycombe Grammar School in the autumn term of 1915, TSE taught at the Highgate Junior School, London, from Jan to Dec 1916.

5. TSE was employed in the Colonial and Foreign Department of Lloyds Bank from 19 Mar 1917 to 2 Nov 1925.

6†. TSE has crossed out "three" in the printed text and inserted "Greek" by hand.

7. TSE's reputation as a linguist in the bank came from compiling extracts and making reports on foreign financial news. "I have to make myself a sort of authority on everything," he

wrote to his mother in Oct 1923, "that goes on of financial and commercial interest in France, Belgium, Italy, Greece, Turkey, Roumania, and North and South America. I read a number of newspapers from the various countries every day, and make such extracts as I have shown you; and I have to make enquiries" (*L2* 255).

8†. TSE has circled "graduating" and "gravitating" and placed a question mark in the right margin.

9. TSE contributed an unsigned monthly article on "Foreign Exchanges" to the *Lloyds Bank Monthly* between July 1923 and Nov 1925; however, in his letter of resignation on 2 Nov he regrets that a colleague "has performed his work and that which was mine, alone since January" (*L2* 770).

10†. TSE has placed an insertion mark between "out being" with a question mark in the left margin.

11†. In the left margin opposite this sentence and the rest of the paragraph, TSE writes: "Not quite right here." The Victoria Cross (VC), established by Queen Victoria in 1856 as the highest military decoration for valor, was awarded to members of the armed forces of the UK and the British Empire.

12. For TSE's account of Captain Lawrence Oates and Richard Scott on the Terra Nova Expedition to Antarctica (1910-13), see "Elizabethan Travellers' Tales" (3.675, n.3).

B. Editorial Introduction to Reconstructed Lectures, 1933

In addition to his Norton, Turnbull, and Page-Barbour Lectures, Eliot gave at least three invited lectures for special occasions: "The Bible as Scripture and as Literature" for the Women's Alliance at King's Chapel, Boston; "Two Masters," revised and published as "The Modern Dilemma" for the Boston Association of Unitarian Clergy; and the Commencement Address at his old school, Milton Academy, all partially preserved in some form by members of the audience. He also prepared at least six lectures that he gave at colleges and universities during the winter and spring of 1932-33: "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry," "The Development of Taste in Poetry," "The Study of Shakespeare Criticism," "English Poets as Letter Writers," "The Tendency of Some Modern Poetry," and "The Verse of John Milton." Before he returned to England in June 1933, he destroyed all of them. At that time he gave his lecture notes for English 26, his Harvard course on "English Literature from 1890 to the Present Day," to Professor Theodore Spencer, likewise "having no further use for them" (4.758). Another lecture, "Modern Education and the Classics," delivered before the Classical Club at Harvard, he kept and revised for its first printing in *Essays Ancient and Modern* (1936), and eventually for inclusion in the third edition of *Selected Essays* (1951).

On 26 December 1932, Eliot wrote to Alida Monro that he had written five lectures in the past three weeks. That same day he departed by train from Boston to Claremont, California, to visit Emily Hale at Scripps College. On 5 January, he lectured there on "Edward Lear and Modern Poetry," repeating the lecture at the University of Southern California on 9 January. He lectured on "The Formation of Taste" at the University of California, Los Angeles, on 6 January, and again at Berkeley on 11 January before beginning his return journey to Boston by way of St. Louis, St. Paul, and Buffalo, stopping over to give additional lectures. Throughout the spring semester, he lectured or read his poetry at New England colleges and universities: Yale, Princeton, Bryn Mawr, Mount Holyoke, Haverford, Smith, Vassar, Wellesley, Bowdoin, Brown, Columbia, and the New School of Social Research. In all of these venues, Eliot's presence attracted press reports by college and city papers – some with brief summaries, some with extensive narratives and quotations. The editors have collected and collated these reports in an attempt to reconstruct from excerpts the likely organization and development of the lectures, based on repetitions and similarities of reported themes, references to authors and works, quotations, summaries, and conclusions. The excerpted narratives of the reports are incorporated with minimal emendation.

There are two other sources for reconstruction: Harvard Professor F. O. Matthiessen and Eliot's brother Henry Ware Eliot (HWE), both of whom had access to the typescripts of Eliot's lectures and transcribed several passages verbatim. Matthiessen recorded the passages in the book that he was writing while Eliot was at Harvard, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot* (1935). Henry, who had attended several lectures, arranged a weeklong family farewell gathering for Eliot at Mountain View House in Randolph, New Hampshire, from 10 to 16 June, with a personal aim of reading and taking notes on all of his brother's lectures. "I will bring my lectures," Eliot assured him on 21 May, "but you must not take them too seriously, as I want a holiday." The transcriptions made by Matthiessen and HWE have been incorporated into the reportorial accounts.

Memories and brief reports of the lectures led to numerous inquiries in later years. Former Harvard student Herbert B. Myron Jr., who heard Eliot talk on Edward Lear to the Harvard "Modern Language Conference," of which Myron was president, wrote on 16 March 1953 to express his frustration at not finding the lecture among Eliot's essays. "I am flattered that you should retain any interest in the lecture I gave on Edward Lear," Eliot replied on 2 April, "and am therefore sorry to say that I destroyed the script of this and of a number of occasional lectures which I delivered in the United States in 1932-33. Perhaps some day I shall return to the subject, and I hope, improve on my original effort." On 29 January 1958, TSE sent a similar reply to Nadia Aboulmagi in Dublin, who requested for her thesis a copy of a lecture from which Matthiessen had quoted on Browning, and again on 12 May 1958 in reply to Harry T. Moore's request for a copy of "English Poets as Letter Writers," regretting that he "can therefore be of no help to you in connection with your edition of Lawrence's letters."

Only one report of the lecture on "The Verse of John Milton," delivered on 21 April in the McMillin Theatre at Columbia University, survives, from an unidentified clipping in a New York paper: "*Samson Agonistes* was to Milton what *Sons and Lovers* was to Lawrence, and the *Portrait of an Artist as a Young Man* was to Joyce. Eliot drew a distinction between the oral and visual qualities of various poets: Pope, Milton, James Joyce; the last showing in his work a combination of oral and visual, with the oral strongest in *Work in Progress*. There are in all of them certain qualities in common and an expression of frustrated strength" (Virginia). A library index card at Columbia records that the attendance was 891 and that Eliot received $100; three years later, however, he gave a lecture by the same title to the English Association, published in its *Essays and Studies* (1936) and collected as "Milton I" in *On Poetry and Poets* (1957). Given the continuing interest of students and scholars in the referenced but destroyed lectures, the richness of significant material contained in reports and partial transcriptions, and TSE's continued development of the subjects, the editors have reconstructed the lectures as far as possible from extant materials for *The Complete Prose*.

Edward Lear and Modern Poetry[1]

Mr. Eliot began with the remark that the subject was essentially too difficult and abstruse a one for him, and that he could offer only a tentative suggestion of hardly more than the problem itself (*SCW*). His lecture, he announced, was not to be a difficult lecture on a simple subject, but a simple lecture on a difficult subject. Edward Lear's poetry is not as childish or meaningless as it is commonly considered (*WCN*). The poetry of Edward Lear should not be treated as "children's" poetry, but distinctly for adult minds (*BEN*).

He used as the key note of his lecture the words of Walter Pater: "All art consciously aspires towards the condition of music," so that perfection of poetry "seems to depend, in part, on a certain suppression . . . of mere subject, so that the meaning reaches us through ways not directly traceable by the understanding" (*Scr*).[2] In quoting Pater's essay . . . Mr. Eliot made a defense for this sonic, musical, somewhat unintelligible poetry, which makes no pretense at sense, but pleases the ear, or creates an emotional effect (*BCE*).

Eliot told his audience that there are two types of poetry, one in which the words are used simply to give meaning, the other in which the words are used for their sonic effect, but in great poetry the words do both (*BCE*). His talk was an exposition of the parts played by pure meaning, sound and word association in poetry, and he used Edward Lear as his chief example (*NYHT*). Of the poetry of Lear, he said: "It matters little what the meaning is, so long as I have enjoyed it and so long as it has stirred me." "The important thing about a poem is not what it means, but rather what it says" (*CSM*).

One of his themes was that modern "unintelligible" poetry derives from Lear as one of its sources. Lear, a contemporary of Lewis Carroll, the author of *Alice in Wonderland*, was a writer of light verse, in which there was more nonsense than sense, and in which the words were chosen not to convey ideas, but emotional effects – the emotion being of the whimsical sort (*BCE*).

Edward Lear, author of *Nonsense Songs and Stories* (1870), is different from other nonsense poets, such as W. S. Gilbert and Lewis Carroll. Lear and Carroll wrote [not only] for children, but for particular friends of theirs. Children like their works, but this is only incidental; our adult enjoyment is what really matters (*SCW*).

There were a few neatly juggled observations – about the more adult appeal of Lear's nonsense in comparison with Carroll's, and about the probability that a child who prefers Lear's verse to Carroll's has a sense of poetic appreciation – about the relative merits of Lear, who says something poetic even when he expresses an intent to make no sense, and Swinburne, who expresses an implied intent to make sense, but says nothing poetic about the emotional conception of poetry as "musings"; art in contrast with the more detached conception of poetry as a resolving of emotional and critical functions (*NYEP*).

Both poets suppress some elements which we ordinarily expect in "normal" poetry, in order to enhance our enjoyment of other elements. All "obscure" poets such as those of today always isolate some element. Carroll isolates the intellectual elements while Lear isolates the pure poetry, or musical element, and appeals to the child in the adult. Carroll is metaphysical while Lear is romantic (*SCW*).

Eliot defined four classes of poets where the question of meaning arises: those who mean something, those who think they mean something, those who don't mean anything, and the obscure poets. He then read selections from and drew comparisons between Lear and Tennyson, Swinburne, Mallarmé, W. H. Auden, and Lewis Carroll (*Scr*), pointing out that in each was the important problem of meaning (*SCW*). It is extremely difficult to determine whether there is more poetical quality in poetry of the serious type than in poetry of the nonsense type, he told his audience. To illustrate his point, he compared one of Tennyson's poems with verse, similar in structure, written by Lear (*BEN*).

Mr. Eliot's attention was caught by Aldous Huxley's statement of the similarity between Tennyson's poem to Catullus and Lear's verses on the Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo.[3] This observation aroused speculation in Mr. Eliot's mind as to the relative merits of the two poets. The difference between them is the difference between that which is estimably meaningless and that which lays claim to a profound and deep significance. Can we, he asked, enjoy poetry the meaning of which we do not know? (*WCN*)

Swinburne, another contemporary of Lear, also was held up for comparison to this effect: that Swinburne was an adolescent who pretended to be writing poetry with much meaning, though it was really meaningless, whereas Lear did not even pretend to be making sense (*BCE*).

Eliot adds that Swinburne achieves his effects by rhythm and emotional use of words, the intellectual content being negligible.[4] His poetry does not really mean any more than Lear's (*Scr*).

Referring back to Pater's quote, Eliot mentions that there is a certain suppression of subject in both Lear and Swinburne. In Lear the sentiment is disguised because it pretends to be something more than it is. Swinburne pretends to retain the moral meaning which gives poetry its seriousness. He believes he is affirming a moral value, while Lear knows he is not. Lear isolates the poetical element in poetry by pretending that he is parodying the whole spirit of poetry. Both poets seek to approximate the condition of true music. They make the pure sound serve the sense of human sentiment (*SCW*).

On reading from the modern French poet Mallarmé, he stressed the point that in this as in any other modern poetry the meaning is very difficult to grasp (*SCW*). Mallarmé is practically unintelligible even to the French. Yet it is possible to enjoy and to be moved by poetry imperfectly understood (*Scr*).[5]

While both Lear and Lewis Carroll wrote nonsense poetry, the work of the two is antithetical (*BEN*). Both writers have isolated and exaggerated some of the elements of poetry to gain their effects. Obscure poetry is produced in this same way, which gives it a different range of valuations from ordinary experience (*Scr*). Carroll's whimsy, with its detective story elements, its logical procedure, appeals to the adult element in children, whereas Lear's poetry, which is more "poetic" and less, logical, appeals to the childish side of adults (*BCE*).

In contrasting Lear's nonsense rhymes with those of Lewis Carroll, we realize that there is nothing childish about either. The fact that children like them gives us our license to enjoy them ourselves. Few children prefer Lear to Carroll. This is because Carroll appeals to the adult in the child, and Lear to the child in the adult. Like the obscure poetry of the Middle Ages, the Jabberwock speaks to our emotions.[6] Lear's field is the lyrical and emotional appeal to grown-up children. The great contribution of both Lear and Carroll is the suppression of certain elements in order to bring out certain others (*WCN*).

Mr. Eliot next raised the question of whether or not Swinburne was a truer poet than Lear. Lear's poetry gives the effect of some deeper meaning when we know a priori that there is to be none, while Swinburne often pretends to say something significant and only succeeds in expressing the meaningless very beautifully. . . . Both Lear and Swinburne are poetical, but for different reasons. In Lear, sentiment is disguised because it pretends not to be there, and in Swinburne it is disguised because it pretends to be more than it is. "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat"[7] and Lear's other nonsense rhymes, as well as Swinburne's poetry, depend upon a few simple human sentiments (*WCN*).

Mr. Eliot came to the conclusion that the greatest poetic art is that which sacrifices the least of the other poetic elements in the approximation toward the condition of music. Swinburne gives the illusion of profound meaning where there is no meaning; whereas Lear does not mean to mean anything. This is the main distinction between the two. As pure music there is little to choose between the poetry of Lear and Tennyson; great poetry is, however, the union of the critical and emotional. The suppression of all critical intelligence leaves only sentimentality such as we find in Swinburne and Lear. Only a true balance of these two elements gives real poetry. This balance can exist in comparatively unintelligible verse such as Mallarmé's. How far is it necessary that the meaning of poetry, if there is one, should reach the reader, is still a debatable question (*Scr*).

Mr. Eliot declared that the true poetic art sacrifices nothing in aspiring toward the condition of music. This way he modifies Pater's statement, which says there is some suppression of subject in perfect poetry. It approximates this just in so far as the other purposes which the poem serves, admit. Lear's poetry is pure and genuine poetry in its musical value, but it suppresses sense for the sake of sound and so does not attain true poetic height. His verse has nothing to do with the feelings or occupations of children, but with ordinary adult or adolescent sentiment (*SCW*).

In conclusion, Mr. Eliot warned his audience against poetry in which all sense is sacrificed to the effect of music. There must be in poetry a balance between the intellectual and the emotional. Poetical experience must be the definite experience of a definite person, and there must be a relation between the poet's experience and the experience of his readers. If subject matter is suppressed too much, poetry becomes thin and meaningless. Every good poem has a particular meaning or "smell" differentiating it from every other poem (*WCN*).

"All modern poets attempt to write in such a way that the meaning reaches us in ways not distinctly traceable by the understanding! But what exactly is the meaning? Here my intellect fails and I must leave the question to others." Thus Mr. Eliot concluded, leaving his spectators in mid air, groping for some solution to the ingenious puzzle with he had set them (*SCW*).

NOTES

1. The lecture was first given on 5 Jan 1933 at Scripps College, Balch Hall, under the title "The Poetry of Edward Lear," and reported as "Noted Modern Poet and Critic Addresses Audience in Balch" in *The Scripture*, 3 (9 Jan 1933), 3; hereafter abbreviated (*Scr*); the report was reproduced by William Baker in *English Studies*, 64 (Dec 1983), 564-66. TSE repeated the lecture at the University of Southern California on 9 Jan (no report). The narrative of this reconstructed lecture is excerpted from the following additional newspaper accounts:

"Meaningful, Sonic Poetry Termed Best," *Buffalo Courier-Express* (27 Jan 1933), 12 (*BCE*); "Lear Poetry for Adults, Fenton Lecturer Says," in *Buffalo Evening News* (27 Jan), 5 (*BEN*); reports of lecture on 26 Jan to the Twentieth Century Club of the University of Buffalo.

"T. S. Eliot Sets His Audience Baffling Puzzle in Lecture," *Smith College Weekly* (1 Mar 1933), 4 (*SCW*); report of lecture on 24 Feb in Sage Hall, Smith College.

"T. S. Eliot Defends Meaningless Poems," *Christian Science Monitor* (7 Apr 1933), 4 (*CSM*); report of lecture on 6 Apr in the Institute of Modern Literature, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME.

"T. S. Eliot as a Lecturer," *New York Evening Post* (21 Apr 1933), 9 (*NYEP*); "T. S. Eliot Analyzes Poetry in Lecture to 400 Here," *New York Herald Tribune* (21 Apr 1933), 13 (*NYHT*); reports of lecture on 20 Apr at the New School of Social Research. TSE's lecture was preceded by a dinner hosted by the School's director, Alvin Johnson, in the Orozco Room for over sixty persons, including many American writers and critics: Stephen Vincent Benet, Waldo Frank, Mrs. Isabel Patterson, Ogden Nash, Joseph Wood Krutch, Gorham B. Munson, Arthur Guiterman, Leo Wolman, Arthur Livingston, A. S. W. Rosenbach, J. Donald Adams, Clifton Fadiman, Harry Hansen, and Gilbert Seldes (*NYEP*); also Justice Learned Hand (*NYHT*).

"T. S. Eliot Talks on Lear and Modern Nonsense Poets," *Wellesley College News* (11 May 1933), 1, 6 (*WCN*); report of lecture given on 3 May at Wellesley College, Alumnae Hall.

On 2 Oct 1932, as he began to prepare a series of lectures for delivery at American universities, TSE wrote to his Faber secretary, Barbara Wilberforce, to have a London bookstore "send me a copy of Edward Lear's Nonsense Books: not the illuminated edition, but the edition with Lear's own illustrations; and not the Limericks, but the complete text of his other poems, with also Four Little People & Quangle Wangle's Hat included." This was Lady Strachey's edition of *The Complete Nonsense Book* (New York: Dodd Mead, 1912), by the poet, author, and illustrator Edward Lear (1812-88). The edition includes "The Story of the Four Little Children Who Went Round the World," which contains a character named Slingsby, possibly the source for Miss Helen Slingsby in TSE's "Aunt Helen"; it also includes "How Pleasant to Know Mr. Lear," adapted by TSE for "How delightful to meet Mr. Hodgson!" and "How unpleasant to Meet Mr. Eliot!" in "Five Finger Exercises" (1933).

TSE first lectured on Lear in "The Laureates of Nonsense – Edward Lear, Lewis Carroll, and the Makers of Light Verse" in his 1917 Course of Twenty-Five Lectures on Victorian Literature (1:588).

2. From "The School of Giorgione" (1877), added to the third edition of *The Renaissance* (1888).

3. Huxley discusses the similarities of Lear's poem (1877) and Tennyson's poem to Catullus, "Frater Ave atque Vale" (1883), in his "Edward Lear," which appeared in the *Athenaeum* on 13 Aug 1920 when he and TSE were both on the staff (rpt. in *On the Margin*, 1923, 167-72). "I remember his pointing out to me once," TSE recalled, "that the metre of *Catullus* was identical with that of Edward Lear's *Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo*." Introduction to *Aldous Huxley 1894-1963: A Memorial Volume*, ed. Julian Huxley (London: Chatto & Windus, 1957), 31.

4. See TSE's assertion in "Swinburne as Poet" (1920) that "in Swinburne there is no *pure* beauty – no pure beauty of sound, or of image, or of idea. . . . Now, in Swinburne the meaning and the sound are one thing" (2.182-83).

5. The *New York World-Telegram* of 21 Apr 1933 announced in "Book Marks for Today" that TSE's second lecture at the New School of Social Research on 27 Apr would be "on Mallarmé" (23), but he gave a reading of his poems instead. There is no evidence that he gave a separate lecture on Mallarmé on his American tour.

6. A beast in Carroll's nonsense poem, "Jabberwocky," in *Through the Looking Glass* (1871): "'Beware the Jabberwock, my son! / The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!'" TSE refers to and quotes from Carroll's "The Hunting of the Snark" in his first Clark lecture (2.615).

7. "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat" (1871): "The Owl and the Pussy-Cat went to sea / In a beautiful pea-green boat: / They took some honey, and plenty of money, / Wrapped up in a five-pound note."

The Development of Taste in Poetry[1]

Relativity of poetic taste to individual personality was stressed last night by T. S. Eliot. . . . He described three general periods of poetic feeling shading from an adolescent to a mature appreciation of poetry (*DC*). Taste in poetry must not be an objective thing, but rather must have relation to one's own personality . . . Mr. Eliot traced the development of taste in the individual, drawing upon personal experience for his material. He termed his choice in poetry at the age of twelve, the first stage in the development of taste, as "martial and sanguinary." "Horatius at the Bridge," and "Paul Jones' Sea Fight" delighted him (*CDB*).[2]

In discussing his feeling toward poetry during what he termed his second stage of development, Eliot declared: "Being able to get an intense emotion from poetry is like just becoming aware of your existence" (*CDB*). For poetry that moves an individual is good for that person. Moreover, he declared that a person's attitude toward poems altered like an individual's feelings toward people. What one liked in his youth, he said, might not appeal to him in more mature years (*OT*).[3]

The blunting of sensibilities upon growing into adulthood is not necessary, he contended. In the third stage of developing his poetical taste, he recalls vividly experiencing Dante's "Divine Comedy." His feeling was that it "had been there all the time," which led to his distinction between major and minor poetry. "Minor poetry is that which we enjoy only when in a certain mood; great poetry is always capable of subduing our passing moods to its own permanence, solidity, and universality" (*CDB*).

After progressing to a mature appreciation of poetry, which involves the whole personality and character, Eliot declared that one's taste is, as man himself, never perfect. He termed his own taste as capricious and limited, stating that he had never been able to appreciate Goethe or some of Wordsworth (*CDB*). "You can not expect to attain perfect taste in literature any more than you can expect to become a perfect man or woman," Eliot said (*OT*).[4]

For at this point has our development been merely a development of *taste*, that is, an approximation to a discerning, appreciative enjoyment of all the poetry worth reading, in its proper kind and degree. Such an ambition is a phantom, the pursuit of which we may leave to those whose aim in life is to be "cultivated" or "cultured" – I do not know which is the right word to use. Such people treat art as a luxury, and commonly end by becoming themselves luxury articles. The ideal is unattainable, and I think is in some sense even undesirable.

Eliot declared that the great necessity for a taste in poetry is sincerity: "I should not preclude myself to enjoy any poem because I have been presented with convincing evidence from the outside that the poem is enjoyable," said Eliot. "Neither should I make up my mind not to enjoy a poem because I have been informed by critics that it is beneath my contempt. I should have the courage to know what I like and then go on liking it" (*OT*). "I do not affirm that what I like in poetry is good. If one is sincere he will not enjoy a thing because he is told it is great. He must be true to his own feelings. Self-knowledge is the most important factor in knowing what we really feel" (*CDB*). "If you don't like Goethe's poems, whereas you do like something that many critics hold to be not as good, you have nothing to apologize for in your taste for poetry!" Eliot said frankly that he doubted if he would enjoy Goethe, while he laughingly related that he would rather read an elementary book on algebra or a detective story than pursue other "accepted" works in the literary realm (*OT*).[5]

NOTES

1. TSE first delivered this lecture in Royce Hall at the University of California at Los Angeles on 6 Jan 1933, as reported in "Poetical Taste Fits Individual, Declares Eliot / Discrimination Varies at Different Ages, He Says," *California Daily Bruin*, 10 (9 Jan 1933, 1), abbreviated (*CDB*). The reconstructed narrative is based on the following additional newspaper accounts and on transcriptions by his brother (HWE) from the original text:

"Sincerity Basis of Taste in Poetry, Critic Asserts," *Oakland Tribune* (12 Jan 1933, 13) (*OT*);

"Poetic Taste Told by Critic-Lecturer," *The Daily Californian* (12 Jan 1933, 1) (*DC*); reports of the lecture at the University of California, Berkeley, on 11 Jan.

TSE subsequently revised the lecture as "Note to Chapter 1 / On the Development of Taste in Poetry" and added it to the end of his Introduction to *The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism* (4.591), where examples and phrases from the newspaper reports and the original typescript appear.

2. "Horatius at the Bridge," by Thomas Babington Macaulay in his *Lays of Ancient Rome* (1842), and the "sea-fight" of the American Revolutionary War hero John Paul Jones (1747-92) in sections 35-36 of Walt Whitman's *Song of Myself* (1891): "Would you hear of an old-time sea-fight? / Would you learn who won by the light of the moon and stars?" In "Walt Whitman and Modern Poetry" (1944), TSE remarked that Whitman is "a greater poet than Tennyson . . . there is something more in Whitman's account of John Paul Jones's seafight in *Song of Myself* – a

greater depth and universality – than in Tennyson's 'Revenge,' or any of his military and patriotic poems." See Donald Gallup, "Mr. Eliot at the Churchill Club," *Southern Review*, 21 (Autumn 1985), 968-73; here 971.

3. In his notes on this lecture, HWE summarized TSE's statements about reading the plays of Shakespeare and FitzGerald's translation of *The Rubáiyát of Omar Kayyám*, related accounts of which TSE includes in his revision of the lecture for *UPUC* (see 4.591): "Read the plays of Shakespeare because he was a 'docile child' and was given one of them at each birthday or Christmas. First poem which gave him the real experience of enjoying poetry was the Rubaiyat. Wrote some quatrains himself which he was 'sensible enough not to show anyone.' He said this was about the age of fifteen. // On reading this (at Randolph, N. H.) I said to Tom that I was surprised to learn this piece of news about the Rubaiyat. I told him I was certain that when he was about ten I had discovered him reading Milton's Samson Agonistes, and had reported the fact to the family, much to their astonishment. He replied, 'I couldn't have understood much of it, then.' Moreover, by the time he read the Rubaiyat he had already read Browning. I remember observing that the Rubaiyat enjoyed great popularity (this was when Tom was about ten or twelve years old). Tom replied, 'Oh, that's because it's easy to understand.' 'Well,' I replied, 'Browning is popular, too.' 'That is because he's hard to understand,' replied Tom." Houghton: bMS Am 1691 (134). See TSE's discussion of FitzGerald's *Omar* as "a great poem" in "A Scholar's Essays" (3.284-85).

4. The following paragraph is HWE's transcription from TSE's original typescript, made during the family gathering in Randolph, New Hampshire, in mid-June 1933.

5. See also TSE's definitions in "The Education of Taste" (1919): "Taste begins and ends in feeling. Sometimes it is thought that taste is a weak derivative of enthusiasm. What taste is, I suppose, is an organization of immediate experiences obtained in literature, which is individually modified in its shape by the points of concentration of our strongest feelings, the authors who have affected us mostly strongly and deeply. It cannot be had without effort, and without it, our likings remain insignificant accidents" (2.64). In "The Music of Poetry" (1942) , TSE remarked that W. P. Ker "was always aware that the end of scholarship is understanding, and that the end of understanding poetry is enjoyment, and that this enjoyment is gusto disciplined by taste."

The Study of Shakespeare Criticism[1]

Dr. Eliot prefaced his speech with the generalization that "the views which different men have taken of Shakespeare at different times form a commentary on the history of civilization." He began his lecture by stating of Shakespeare, "he is one of those very few poets whom it takes a whole lifetime to understand. One reads him every year with more understanding, for it takes increasing maturity to know him" (*SLP*). Dr. Eliot first suggested the way in which Shakespeare should be read. He said that to fully understand Shakespeare, one should understand the opinions of others about him and thus get a prospective view of him. "There is no English poet which I have taken so long to understand . . . One of the most interesting things about Shakespeare is to view the development of criticism at different times and by different people. This view forms an integral part of the history of different civilizations in Europe" (*HN*). "Mr. Eliot considers it a notable fact that in every period Shakespeare seems to have some quality that attracted the people, in spite of the changing point of view of each generation. The praise of his contemporaries is of especial worth because "greatness, in a sense, is the product of time. Contemporary opinion is often imperfect or wildly wrong." Johnson, in his Preface to Shakespeare, has paid as great a tribute to Shakespeare as any poet could desire, in declaring that his plays, "as they have devolved from one generation to another, have received new honors" (*SL*).[2]

The important periods of Shakespearean criticism were designated by Eliot as that of Ben Jonson, of the Age of Dryden, of Pope, of the French Eighteenth Century, of the French Nineteenth Century as exemplified by Victor Hugo, of the English Nineteenth Century as done by Coleridge and influenced by German critics, and, of course, of the present critics (*SLP*).

In tracing the course of the criticism concerning Shakespeare, Dr. Eliot mentioned first the contemporary critic, Ben Jonson, who "had the most critical mind of his day, but whose opinions were rather curious. Shakespeare's contemporaries didn't realize his genius" (*HN*). "It is the whole pattern of comment rather than any individual criticism which is interesting. The simple praise of Shakespeare's contemporaries doesn't count in the same manner as the contemporary vogue about Byron – and our present neglect – is necessary to an understanding of that poet. The men of Ben Jonson's time criticized the actual play. By the eighteenth century it is evident that criticism is from the study rather than from the pit" (*SLP*).

Eliot has the greatest respect for Dryden's criticism of Shakespeare and advises the reading of all his critical work. His comparison of Shakespeare with Beaumont and Fletcher is both proper and valuable and shows originality and understanding. His appreciation of the difference between them, in spite of the absence of temporal perspective, is evidence of his first-rate capacity (*SL*). In connection with Dryden, who was representative of people a generation away from the acted plays, he added: "I doubt whether I would have had his foresight in choosing Shakespeare ahead of Beaumont and Fletcher" (*HN*).

"The eighteenth century brought a change in the character of criticism. Shakespeare began to be read and criticized from the reading rather than from seeing his plays on the stage. The criticism of this period is largely the result of French influence. French criticism was based largely upon comparison with French plays, which were written to be produced and were criticized accordingly, while the English viewed Shakespeare's plays as dramatic poems. In consequence the French criticism shows misunderstanding (*SL*). "In Pope's time," he said, "we begin to feel that his criticism takes account of other criticism as well as the written plays. . . . Here the attention of the critic becomes focused on the poetry, and not so much on the drama" (*HN*).

Coleridge, De Quincey and Lamb were mentioned as critics of the nineteenth century. The speaker then turned to the influence of foreign criticism, chiefly that of the French and Germans (*HN*). The nineteenth century criticism is largely a development from the German theater and the influence of the work of Coleridge and his friends. The Germans had no dramatic background similar to the French and show greater sympathy and understanding (*SL*).

Shakespearean criticism is not a thing that is finished. Mr. Eliot feels that the criticism of the next period will differ from that of the last in its treatment of Shakespeare's plays as a whole rather than as individual units, and in their consideration as dramatic poetry, rather than as straight drama or straight poetry (*SL*).[3] He discussed Professor Bradley's treatise on Shakespearean tragedy and spoke briefly of what the next turn in Shakespeare criticism might be (*SLP*).[4]

"From what I can see," he continued, "I should say Shakespearean criticism of the next period will differ in two ways. The tendency will not be to consider single plays but to take the whole of Shakespeare as a unity. We are also getting over our antiquated ideas of dramatic poetry, having no longer one dramatic and one poetic point of view. The poetry of the next period will, I hope, have more of a dramatic quality, and in the light of that Shakespeare will be criticized anew" (*SLP*).

Mr. Eliot expressed the hope that the work of future dramatists will create a demand for some adequate form of theater, so that another generation may have more satisfaction in that respect (*SL*).[5] He concluded by emphasizing the fact that "Shakespearean criticism has a great deal to teach us about the development of criticism in general" (*HN*).[6]

NOTES

1. TSE's lecture was delivered under this title in the Graham Memorial Chapel of Washington University, St. Louis, at 4:00 p.m. on 16 Jan 1933, as reported in "T. S. Eliot Discusses Shakespeare's Critics," *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* (17 Jan 1933, 3), abbreviated *SLP*: "The chapel was filled with its capacity of 900, with more standing on the sides and in the rear." The narrative of the reconstructed lecture is taken from the following additional newspaper reports:

"T. S. Eliot Addresses Large Audience in Chapel Yesterday / Grandson of Founder Speaks on Shakespearean Criticism," *Student Life* (Washington University), 57 (17 Jan 1933, 1, 4) (*SL*);

"Dr. Eliot Delivers Literary Lecture / Evolution of Shakespearean Criticism Traced from 1600 to Present," *Haverford News* (10 Apr 1933, 3) (HN); report of lecture on 24 Mar in Roberts Hall, Haverford University, Haverford, PA.

2. TSE quotes from paragraph 5 of Samuel Johnson's Preface to his 1765 edition of Shakespeare: "yet, thus unassisted by interest or passion, [his works] have passed through variations of taste and changes of manners, and, as they have devolved from one generation to another, have received new honours at every transmission."

3. TSE wrote in his Introduction to G. Wilson Knight's *The Wheel of Fire: Interpretations of Shakespearian Tragedy* (1930): "To take Shakespeare's work as a whole, no longer to single out several plays as the greatest, and mark the others only as apprenticeship or decline – is an important and positive step in modern Shakespeare interpretation. More particularly, I think that Mr. Wilson Knight has shown insight in pursuing his search for the pattern below the level of 'plot' and 'character'" (4.149).

4. A. C. Bradley's extended method of character analysis in his *Shakespearean Tragedy: Lectures on Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, Macbeth* (1904) had come under attack. In his "London Letter: June, 1922," TSE had described Bradley's study of the four plays as "a needless luxury" (2.407).

5. TSE's brother copied a note from this lecture when he read it in Randolph, New Hampshire, in June 1933: "In an essay (lecture) entitled "Shakespeare Criticism" occurs the footnote: 'I have attempted a croquis of a play (Sweeney Agonistes) to indicate that our tragic feelings are best expressed not through 'tragedy' but through farce.'"

6. This lecture provided the basis for TSE's "Shakespearian Criticism I. From Dryden to Coleridge," contributed to *A Companion to Shakespeare Studies*, ed. Harley Granville-Barker and G. B. Harrison, published by Cambridge UP in Mar 1934.

The Tendency of Some Modern Poetry[1]

In discussing the aspects of present day poetry, Mr. Eliot declared that the modern poet seemed to serve no essential or necessary function: "Unless the poet's work is of the worst or of the best type it receives no consideration," he asserted. "If it is of the worst type it goes into the newspapers. The best poetry is appreciated only by the cultural minority" (*MD*). He named few poets and no modern poems, and made no effort to give a "comprehensive view" of the field of modern verse. The modern poets in which he is interested are W. B. Yeats and Ezra Pound, he said, pleading at the beginning both ignorance and prejudice regarding the subject (*Sun* 1).

He examined the accusation of obscurity against modern poetry and gave advice to the reader who encounters obscure verse (*Sun* 1). Mr. Eliot did not undertake to deny the charges [of obscurity] that have been made against his own work and that of his contemporary versifiers in the first rank. On the contrary, he admitted the charges and attempted to justify the product in despite of them by explaining that readers were simply unaccustomed to the stuff modern poets turn out. (*Sun* 2).

Obscurity in verse was caused by one of three things, he said – the inability of the poet, the difficulty of the subject matter making obscurity almost inevitable, and a particular type of poetry to which the poet or the reader is unaccustomed. In the modern verse which he has read he said that "obscurity is largely due, deliberately or not, to the suppression of one or more elements in order to emphasize the more essential poetical elements."[2] For the reader, it is largely a matter of getting used to it: "Suppose you went into a drawing room where the people were all without their skins," he suggested. "At first it would be hard to get used to seeing people like that. . . . It would be so entirely new, seeing anyone without human skin. . . . Then conceive that you found them more comfortable without their skins. You could then adjust yourself to the sight. . . . Afterward you would find them, possibly, more interesting. Their eyes would be more expressive. The play of their muscles would be fascinating. . . ." Apparent obscurity in poetry is often like that, he declared. It was a case of getting used to a feeling which had not been experienced (ellipses in *Sun* 1). Similarly, he suggested that readers would in time come to enjoy the sort of poetry that is now being produced. Better a poetry of muscular tissue, he said, than a poetry that is only skin deep. . . . [A] great deal of the poetry he sought to condemn lies at what he called the 'cuticle level.' It is a matter of form and nothing more" (*Sun* 2).

But if a reader does not like a certain piece of poetry, there is no use in bothering with it. "If you get nothing at all out of the first reading, then drop it at once," he advised, "because you can be reasonably certain you never will." But the reader's reaction is what is important, not what the author meant, or what another person thinks he meant. Different readers may get different interpretations, yet have a reaction as vital as the poet's. "Poetry to be valuable to a reader must reach down into the levels which are highly private to the poet and are peculiarly his own . . . to feelings all sensitive people have in common," he said (*Sun* 1).[3]

Poetry in the future may take two new forms, he said, one in which satire will be seriously developed, the other a newer form of poetical drama (*MD*). He prophesied a union of the verse and dramatic forms. He considered true dramatic verse the chief lack at present, and felt that young poets now were feeling that they wanted poetry to have "greater social activity," as such dramas in verse form would afford. The poetry of the future would be satirical, he said, "but not the satire of merriment" (*Sun* 1).

In regard to versification, Mr. Eliot says: "The tendency today is away from freedom, towards a newer form or a revival of older forms." Ezra Pound, William Butler Yeats, and Gerard Hopkins, the "three best modern English poets," have especially influenced versification in recent years. "What more influences people is versification rather than matter." It was as long ago as 1917 that T. S. Eliot and Ezra Pound together decided that free verse had gone too far and that something must be done about it. This "something" resulted in Mr. Eliot's quatrains about Sweeney, modeled on Théophile Gautier's style.[4] The verse of Wilfred Owen, a war poet, and that of the Jesuit priest, Gerard Hopkins, have played an especially important role in the new modern metaphorical system. Hopkins' poetry has only become popular in England during the last two or three years, for Robert Bridges, the late poet-laureate and the owner of Hopkins' manuscripts, refused to let them be published.[5] Mr. Eliot read a passage from Hopkins' "The Leaden Echo and the Golden Echo." These lines illustrated the fact that, in Hopkins' case, inventing new forms was very different from merely casting off old ones. Hopkins' most extreme work has some of the elements of Gertrude Stein's manner or of Joyce's latest work.

"There are not very many contemporary poets who much interest me," says Mr. Eliot. He admits the beauty of Yeats's poetry, especially his "Memorial Poems" and "The Tower."[6] Through his cantos, Yeats affected Archibald MacLeish's generation, "and," adds Mr. Eliot, "I hope myself."[7] Young poets are now going back to earlier English and Scottish poetry – that of Skelton and Dunbar for example. (*BMCN*).

Mr. Eliot's illustrative reading included a poem of Ezra Pound's, in which Pound analyzes himself and his life in England.[8] In regard to his own poems, he said he has read very much better explanations of his work than those which he himself could have done. *The Waste Land* has been called a great criticism of society. He himself terms it merely a "piece of rhythmical grouching" as the result of a personal grouch.[9] Because there was a "fair amount of borrowing" in *The Waste Land*, Mr. Eliot thought it best to provide the poem with notes. He has regretted his action since, for the notes terrified some people and displeased others who like to work out the allusions themselves. "It is always unwise to claim originality," he says. Accusations of plagiarism seem to him ridiculous, since often the whole meaning of a part of his poem hinges on the context of a passage from which he has borrowed phrases or lines.

Some of T. S. Eliot's poetry has been styled automatic writing, but he himself fears that it is no better than deliberate. He very definitely works for precision as, for example, in his use of proper names, however irrelevant they may be. These are to give the reader a feeling that, by this sort of symbolic memory, the author is triangulating the parts of his composition. If the reader knew any more about the names than that they existed, he would be disturbed and his attention distracted.

It has been said that the purpose of poetry is "to communicate experiences." This, Mr. Eliot thinks, is but a theory. The relationship between experience and poetry is uncertain.[10] In one of his own poems – which he personally dislikes – "La Figlia Che Piange," his theme came to him from the description that his friend had given him of an Egyptian design of a weeping girl in the museum at Milan. He was unable to find the design in the museum. The thought of it, however, lay dormant in his mind until some six or seven months later, when he worked back to the verbal echo of his friend's words, and wrote the poem.[11] Perhaps, he thinks, the impression made on him by the lull before a thunder-storm or by the ominous calm of a London dinner-party when an air-raid was expected, found expression in "Sweeney Among the Nightingales" (written in 1917). (*BMCN*)

He went on to discuss "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," not an obscure poem, simply a series of images. "I'm not sure it means anything at all," Mr. Eliot said. For him, the poem as he read it had an atmosphere of suspense and sultriness like the time of the air-raids in London. It is like a piece of still life, the meaning of which one does not formulate; one simply estimates the way the painter has used planes and angles." (*VMS*)

Mr. Eliot read "Sweeney Among the Nightingales," "Gerontion," parts two and five of *Ash Wednesday*, the first and second parts of "Triumphal March," from the "First Difficulty" of the "Difficulties of a Statesman," five short poems concerned with the study and relationship of human beings and small domestic animals,[12] and a passage from the *Fragment of an Agon* in *Sweeney Agonistes*. For these poems he admitted borrowing material from *The Education of Henry Adams*, the Sermons of Donne and of Lancelot Andrewes, from Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* and *Pericles*, the Good Friday church service, Seneca's *Hercules Furens*, General Brusseldorf's military statistics, and the Bible.[13] (*BMCN*)

NOTES

1. TSE first delivered the lecture under this title at the University of Minnesota, Northrop Memorial Auditorium, on 19 Jan 1933, as reported in "Only Best and Worst Poetry Attracts Notice, Eliot Asserts," *The Minnesota Daily* (20 Jan 1933), 3 (*MD*); the narrative of this reconstructed lecture is taken from the following additional newspaper accounts:

"T. S. Eliot Talks on Modern Poetry / Address Takes Up Charge of Obscurity in Verse of Present Day," *The Sun* (3 Feb 1933), 20, 6 (*Sun* 1); "Reunion in Poetry," an editorial in *The Sun* (4 Feb, 8) (*Sun* 2); reports of the Baltimore lecture on 2 Feb titled "Modern Poetry" at the Emmanuel Parish House under the auspices of the Poetry Society of Maryland

"T. S. Eliot Compares Poetry to Still Life / Moderns Lean Away From Freedom Toward Revival of Old Forms / Denies Obscurantism," *Bryn Mawr College News* (3 May 1933), 1, 3 (*BMCN*); report of lecture on 28 Apr titled "Modern Poetry" at Bryn Mawr College, Goodhart Hall.

2. In the Preface to his translation of St. John Perse's *Anabasis* (1930), TSE similarly contends that "any obscurity of the poem . . . is due to the suppression of 'links in the chain,' of explanatory and connecting matter, and not to incoherence . . . The reader has to allow the images to fall into his memory successively without questioning the reasonableness of each at the moment; so that, at the end a total effect is produced" (4.132).

3. Before several of his US lectures and readings, TSE addressed the obscurity of modern poetry. In his reading at Brown University, before 850 persons in Alumnae Hall on 19 Feb, as reported in the *Providence Journal* of 20 Feb (7): "In reference to the general subject of obscurity in poetry, Mr. Eliot pointed out that many persons in reading poetry were apt to look for meanings that were not present. He said he believed a person could admire and enjoy a poem before he fully understood its meaning. 'I have found that I can admire a poem and get a unique

thrill from it before I have completely understood what it was about,' Mr. Eliot declared. 'I believe that every poem should impart this thrill of feeling. This is the important and significant thing about the poem. And for that reason, as one reads, he should watch and see if the poem gives up this particular feeling. The reader may experience this before grasping, or even without grasping, the meaning of the lines'" (8).

4. In his obituary article on Harold Monro in the *Criterion* of July 1932 (581-92), Pound recounted the moment when he urged on TSE Gautier's *Émaux et Camées* (1852, 1872): "at a particular date in a particular room, two authors . . . decided that the dilutation of *vers libre*, Amygism, Lee Masterism, general floppiness had gone too far and that some counter-current must be set going . . . Remedy prescribed: 'Emaux et Camées' . . . Results: Poems in Mr. Eliot's *second* volume . . . also 'H. S. Mauberley'" (590).

5. Bridges did not publish the first edition of Hopkins's *Poems* until Dec 1918, twenty-nine years after the death of Hopkins in 1889.

6. Yeats's "Memorial Poems" refer to pre-1933 elegies such as "In Memory of Major Robert Gregory," "Easter, 1916," and "All Souls' Night." Yeats's title poem, "The Tower," was first published by TSE in the *Criterion* of June 1927.

7. The reporter may have used "cantos" as a general word for Yeats's poems after hearing TSE talk of Pound's cantos.

8. TSE most likely read sections from Pound's "Hugh Selwyn Mauberley" (1920).

9. In a similar lecture-reading at Vassar College on 7 May, as reported in "T. S. Eliot Reads and Comments on His Poetry," *Vassar Miscellany* News, 17 (10 May 1933), 1 (*VMS*), TSE remarked of *The Waste Land*: "Critics have called it a 'criticism of the contemporary world,' but "to me," he confessed, "it was just a piece of rhythmical grumbling." See Valerie Eliot's epigraph for *WLF* – TSE's statement quoted in a lecture by Theodore Spencer and recorded by HWE: "Various critics have done me the honour to interpret the poem in terms of criticism of the contemporary world, have considered it, indeed, as an important bit of social criticism. To me it was only the relief of a personal and wholly insignificant grouse against life; it is just a piece of rhythmical grumbling" (xxxiii).

10. TSE occasionally titled his lecture-readings "The Experience of Poetry" (for the Radcliffe Club) or "The Meaning of Poetry" (for his reading to more than 700 people at the New School of Social Research on 27 Apr). As reported in the *New York Herald Tribune*, "Eliot Recites His Poems at Social Research Hall" (28 Apr 1933, 11), "Eliot proceeded to clear away some of the ideas which have made [his poetry] particularly obscure for many. The poet, he said, does not attempt to communicate the story of an experience, or even a story at all. He may communicate a mood created by an experience, or the fusion of feeling from several experiences. Moreover, he added, it is wrong to assume that the poet has an idea which he then puts in poetry. The ideas, the structure of the poem, most frequently come to him after the mood, the effect that he wishes to create has come when the poem has already nearly taken shape. To illustrate these points he read 'La Figlia Che Piange,' 'Sweeney Among the Nightingales,' and 'Gerontion.'"

11. The Vassar reporter gave this account: "Some one had advised him to see a stone stele of Egyptian origin in an Italian museum. The figure was of a woman, and the Italians called it *La Figlia Che Piange*. He never saw the stele, but the title stuck in his head, so that in the end the poem gave his impression of what that piece of sculpture ought to be. Here the picture and the verbal image were the starting point, and the subject of the poem was the last thing to arrive" (*VMS*).

12. These five poems from TSE's "Five-Finger Exercises" (1933) were also read at Vassar, identified in the *Vassar Miscellany News* as "Lines to a Persian Cat," "Lines to a Yorkshire Terrier," "Lines to a Duck in the Park," "Lines to Ralph Hodgson Esqre.," and "Lines for Cuscuscaraway and Mirza Murad Ali Beg" (*CPP* 135-37).

13. The references to Seneca's *Hercules Furens* and Shakespeare's *Pericles* suggest that TSE also read "Marina."

English Poets as Letter Writers[1]

I am really the last person who ought to be talking to you about letter writers, even within the frame to which I have restricted myself. To begin with, I am almost illiterate, although not analphabetic.[2] I am an extremely ill-educated and ignorant man. I have been trying for some years, indeed, ever since I provided one of my poems with notes, to shatter the fiction that I was a man of vast erudition.[3] I have denied this at every opportunity, at first rather diffidently, finally rather querulously, and I have found that no one believes me. Sherlock Holmes, you will remember, when he remarked that his brother Mycroft's powers of observation were superior to his own, denied with what was for him unusual warmth, that his judgment was in any way biassed by modesty.[4] So do I. I am genuinely sorry for my illiteracy; I have a great respect for educated men. I have certainly made use of the few scraps of learning that I possess, I see no reason why I should not use any quotation if it is apposite; but by quoting an author I do not delude myself into believing that I am perfectly acquainted with his works. Nor, until I woke up and found myself burdened by reviewers with the weight of learning which I disclaimed, did I suppose that any one else would believe it either.[5] I am merely a smatterer in a few very narrow fields. But I know what will happen. My words will fall on deaf ears, and everybody will go on believing in my incredible learning until I am dead. I mean until a few days or a few weeks after I am dead; for critics are always very polite to you while you are still in the obituary state. And then one clever critic will have a new idea, and observe that in spite of this and that it must be said that Eliot was an ignorant man who had read very little. Then they will all take it up; until some other critic has the originality to remark that it is really the most significant thing about me; that it is, in fact, the clue to Eliot. Opinion will, I hope, be divided as to whether I knew how ignorant I was, or whether I was justified in making use of learning which I did not possess, or whether I was a mere impostor. And in all the discussion no one will give me the credit of never having made any pretensions to learning. For the moment I have been speaking, you see, not so much to the present audience as to posterity; for I have an apprehension that the importance of my ignorance is going to be, some years hence, grossly exaggerated. And if I ever print this lecture, you will know the reason why.[6]

The desire to write a letter, to put down what you don't want anybody else to see but the person you are writing to, but which yet you do not want to be destroyed, but perhaps hope may be preserved for complete strangers to read, is ineradicable. We want to confess ourselves in writing to a few friends, and we do not always want to feel that no one but those friends will ever read what we have written.

"The best contemporary letters are as good in their way as those of any other time," Mr. Eliot said (*YDN*), "No other form of communication can ever supplant the letter . . . Letters in the future will be different from those in the past because they will be typed, but no good letter can be dictated; there must be no third person. Letter-writing permits us to forget ourselves and to express the worthwhile things that come spontaneously. It can be a provocation of and a consolation for solitude. Our minds should be left to wander when writing a letter, and a good letter will focus the reader's attention on what the letter is getting at, rather than the letter itself." (*YDN*)

An ideal correspondence, according to Mr. Eliot, will be with a person of the opposite sex, not one with whom the writer is in love, for love letters are monotonous. The recipient of the letter should be a mature friend, sufficiently understanding so that a good deal need not be said, but not to the point where letters will be obscure to others. There should be sufficient sentiment to release the writer's mind to speak freely, without fear of betrayal, for the greatest pleasure derived from letter-writing is being indiscreet. The two correspondents should have interests in common and should be able to be brutally frank. (*YDN*)

"A poet can be judged by his letters," Mr. Eliot said. 'To me, the letters of Keats are the finest letters in existence of English poets, for Keats could express great truth and yet be frivolous. Shelley's letters, however, are dull." Other poets whose letters appeal to Mr. Eliot are D. H. Lawrence and Virginia Woolf, whose epistles he termed "master-pieces of the letter-writing art." (*YDN*) [He then quoted from a letter of Lawrence:][7]

> The essence of poetry with us in this age of stark and unlovely actualities is a stark directness, without a shadow of a lie, or a shadow of deflection anywhere. Everything can go, but this stark, bare, rocky directness of statement, this alone makes poetry to-day.[8]

This speaks to me of that at which I have long aimed, in writing poetry: to write poetry which should be essentially poetry, with nothing poetic about it, poetry standing naked in its bare bones, poetry so transparent that we see not the poetry, but that which we are meant to see through the poetry, poetry so transparent that in reading it we are intent on what the poem points at and not the poetry, this seems to me the thing to try for. To get beyond poetry, as Beethoven, in his later works, strove to get beyond music.[9] We never succeed, perhaps, but Lawrence's words mean this to me, that they express to me what I think that the forty or fifty lines that I have written strive towards.[10]

NOTES

1. TSE delivered this lecture on "English Poets as Letter Writers" on 23 Feb 1933 in the Sprague Memorial Hall, Yale University. More than 500 persons attended the lecture, which was arranged by the poet-novelist John Cournos and funded by the Lamont Memorial Foundation. TSE wrote to Virginia Woolf on 5 Mar 1933, "I have given a lecture at Yale on English Letter Writers. I only found out that I had to lecture on English Letter Writers 5 days before the lecture; that was trying." TSE's brother Henry Ware Eliot (HWE) noted that he transcribed the opening paragraph from TSE's original text: "I attended the lecture, and later, at Randolph, N.H. in June, 1933, read a binder-full of T.S.E.'s lectures in manuscript (with his permission) and copied this and other extracts from them." Houghton: MS Am1691 (134). The reconstruction also incorporates the student news report: "Contemporary Letters Are as Good as Any, Says Eliot / British-American Poet Pictures Ideal Correspondence Modeled on Keats," *Yale Daily News*, 56 (24 Feb 1933, 3), abbreviated *YDN*.

2. analphabetic (OED): Not knowing the letters: totally illiterate

3. The twelve pages of "Notes" added to the first edition of *The Waste Land* (1922).

4. In Adventure IX of *The Memoirs of Sherlock Holmes* (1894), Arthur Conan Doyle records Holmes's conversation with Watson about the hereditary powers of his elder brother Mycroft: "'My dear Watson,' said he. 'I cannot agree with those who rank modesty among the virtues. . . . When I say, therefore that Mycroft has better powers of observation than I, you may take it that I am speaking the exact and literal truth.'"

5. In 1923 F. L. Lucas's hostile review of *TWL* and its allusions and notes began: "Among the maggots that breed in the corruption of poetry one of the commonest is the bookworm" (*Contemporary Reviews*, 115-16); more recently, F. R. Leavis had written of "the rich disorganization of the poem": "The seeming disjointedness is intimately related to the erudition that has annoyed so many readers and to the wealth of the literary borrowings and allusions." *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932), 90-91.

6. The following paragraph is the second extract copied from the original by HWE.

7. HWE included in his extracts TSE's following quotation from and commentary on D. H. Lawrence's letter of 11 Jan 1916 to Catherine Carswell: "T.S.E. repeated this last sentence with approval, and continued."

8. *The Letters of D. H. Lawrence*, ed. Aldous Huxley (London: Heinemann, 1932), 308.

9. TSE wrote to Stephen Spender on 28 Mar 1931 that he was "delighted to hear that you have been at the late Beethoven – I have the A minor quartet on the gramophone, and find it quite inexhaustible to study. There is a sort of heavenly or at least more than human gaiety about some of his later things which one imagines might come to oneself as the fruit of

reconciliation and relief after immense suffering; I should like to get something of that into verse once before I die."

10. TSE's paragraph on Lawrence's letter was also copied from the original manuscript by Harvard professor F. O. Matthiessen, who printed it in *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot* (Oxford: Oxford UP, 1935); he described the passage as TSE's "profoundly suggestive" reflection on Lawrence's letter after reading it (89-90). TSE, who befriended Matthiessen at Harvard, wrote to Professor Itrat-Husain on 10 Feb 1939 that during his stay he was "constantly in the company of Professor Matthiessen, and showed him a number of lectures which have since been destroyed, and also had a number of conversations with him about my work." Matthiessen, who acknowledged TSE's assistance with his book (ix), may thus have had privileged information when he remarks of TSE's quotation above: "One passage that Eliot must have had in mind when making those remarks is that of the bare but musical lines in the final section of *The Waste Land*, the creation of which seems to have taken rise from his memory of the sound of the 'water-dripping song' of the hermit-thrush, thus giving another glimpse into the way in which his own auditory imagination works: *If there were the sound of water only / Not the cicada / And dry grass singing / But sound of water over a rock / Where the hermit-thrush sings in the pine trees / Drip drop drip drop drop drop drop drop / But there is no water*" (90).

Matthiessen notes that TSE's lecture was "primarily on Keats and Lawrence" (96). See TSE's commentary on Keats's letters in his Norton lecture, "Shelley and Keats" (4.649-50) and his discussion of Lawrence's letters in his Harvard course, English 26 (4.790-91).

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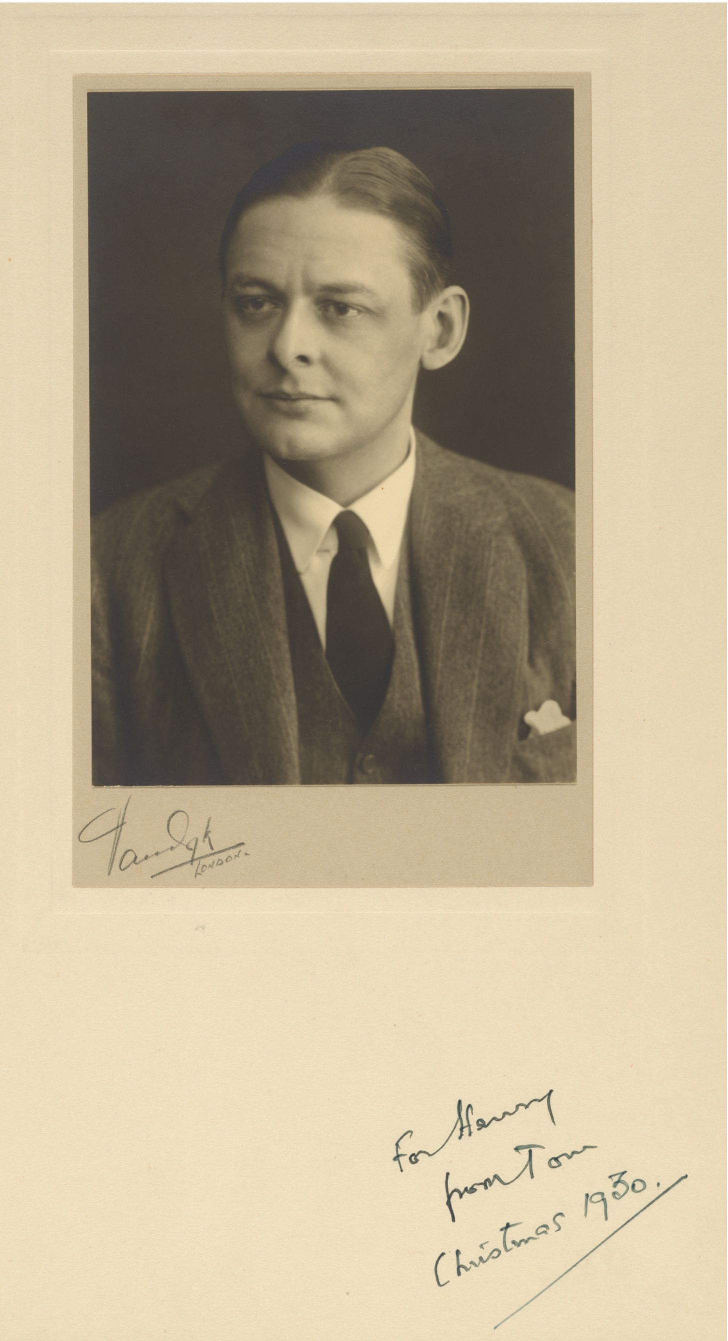
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from Tom
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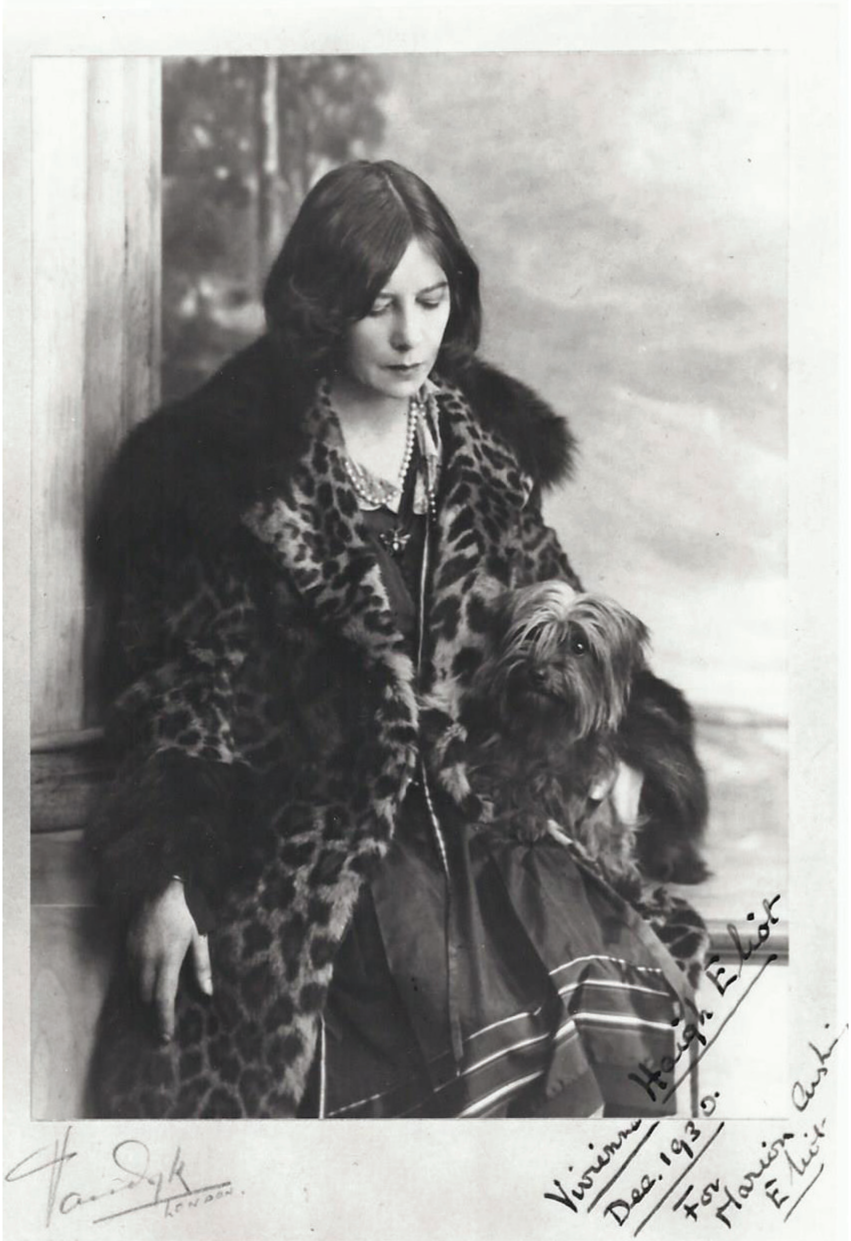
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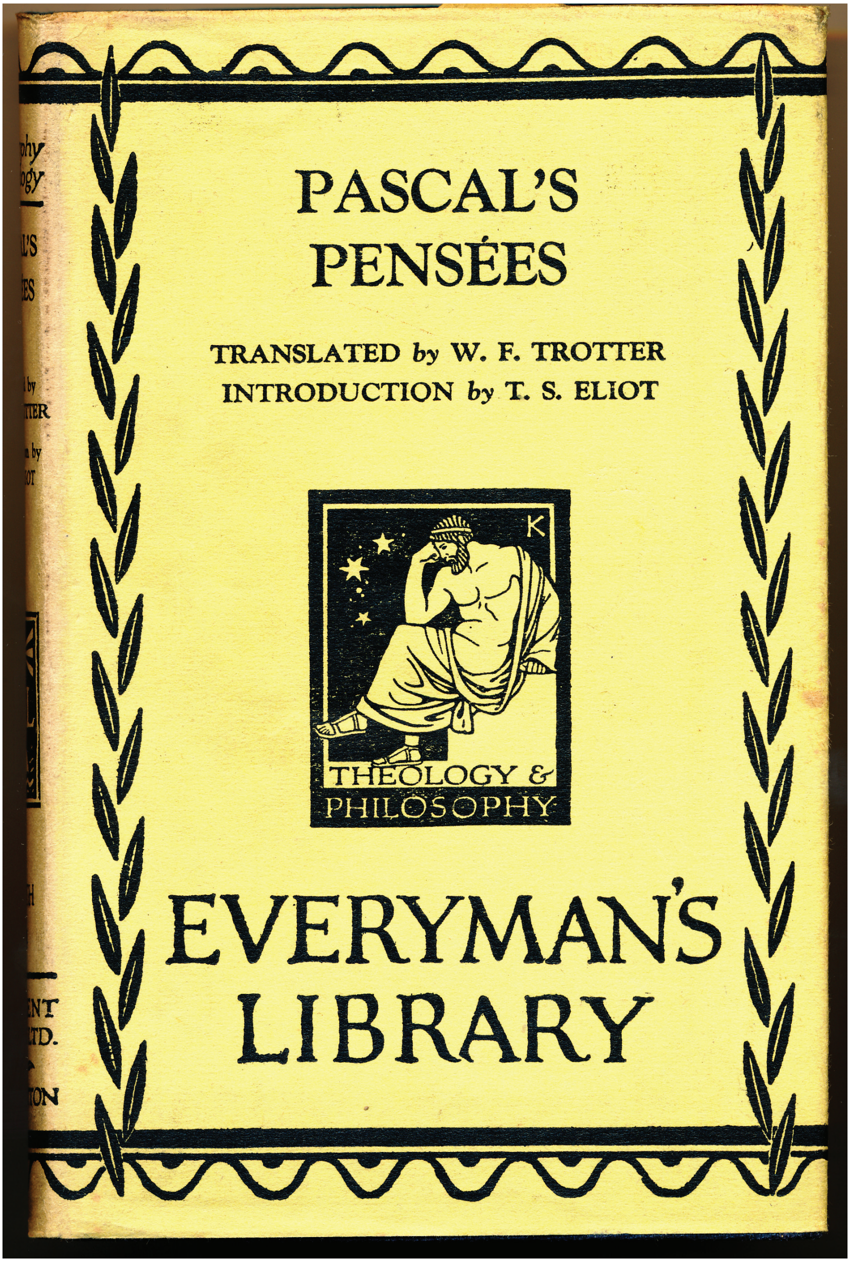
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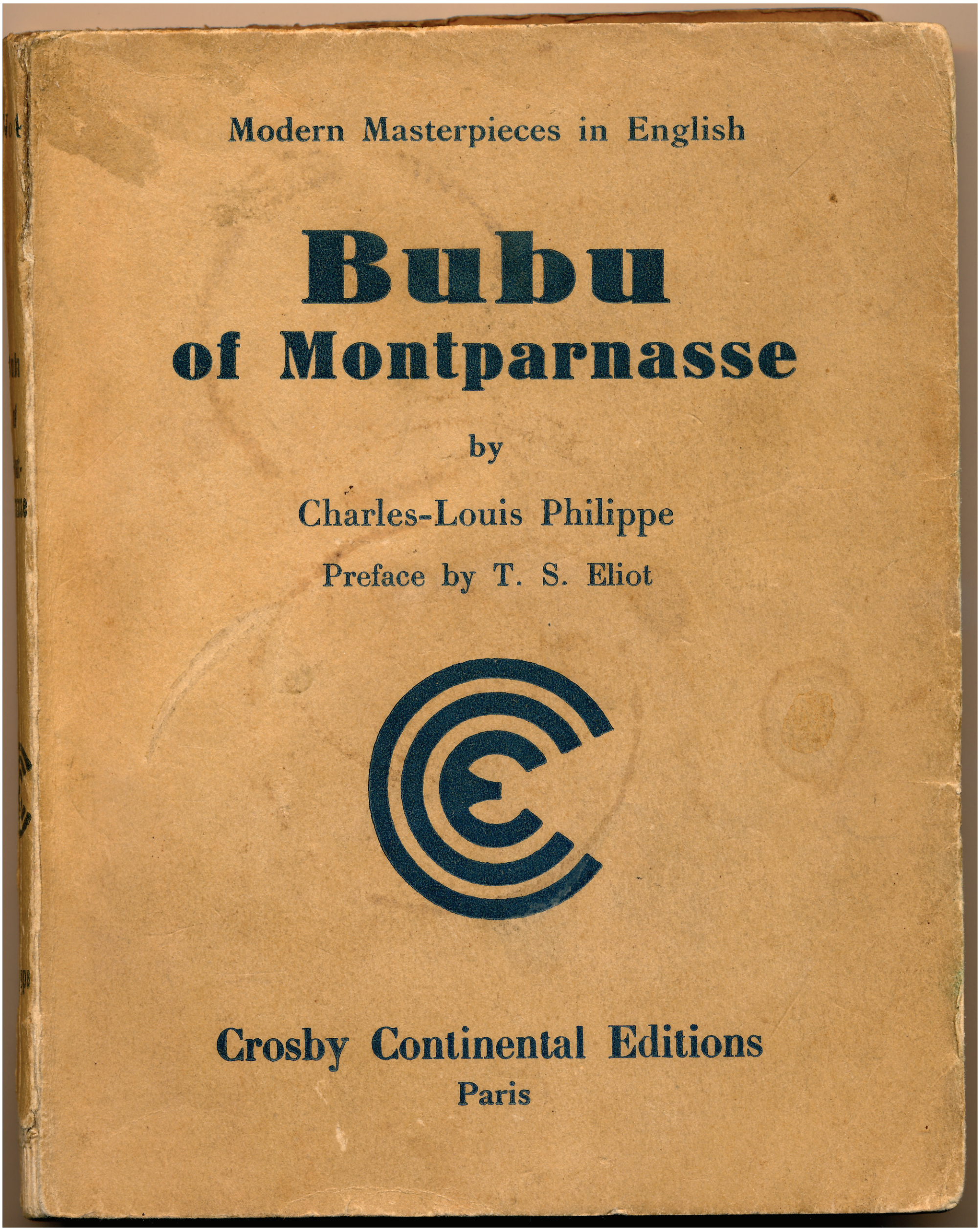

Modern Masterpieces in English

Bubu
of Montparnasse

by

Charles-Louis Philippe

Preface by T. S. Eliot

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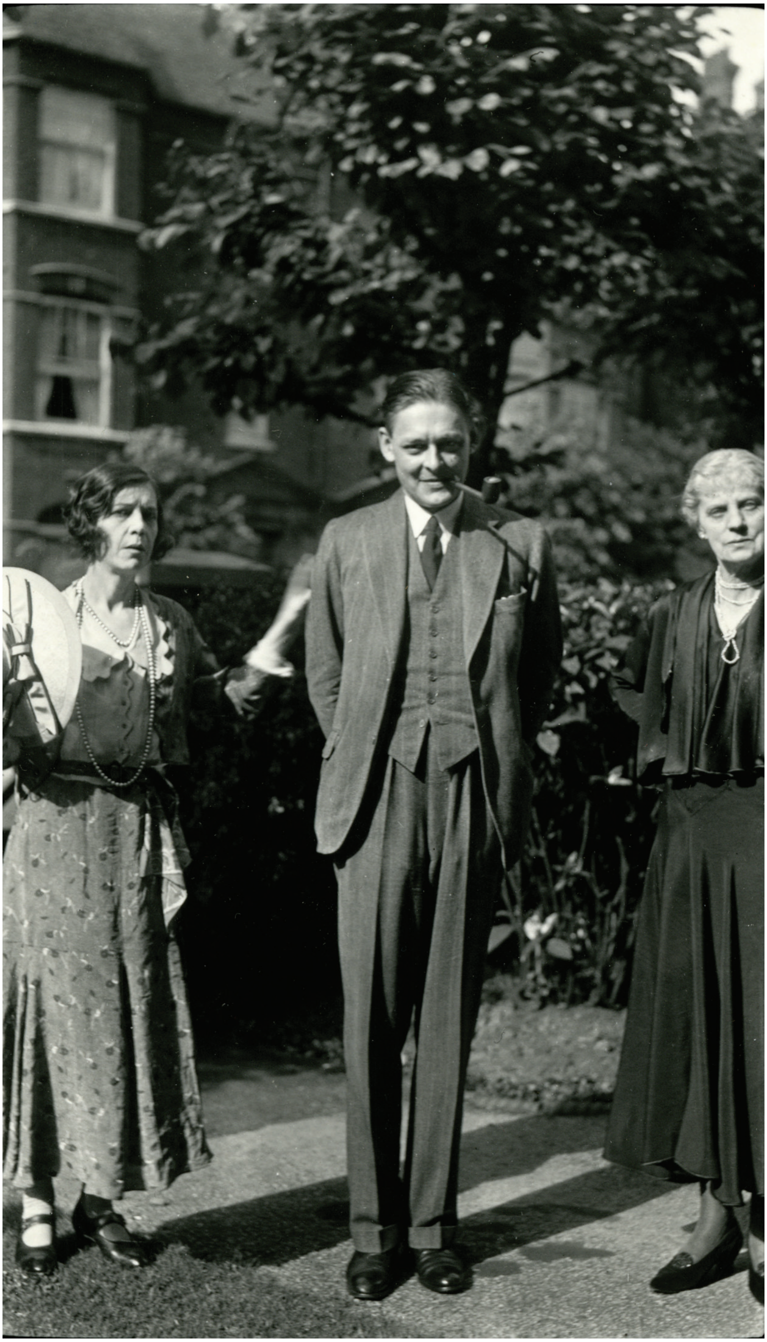
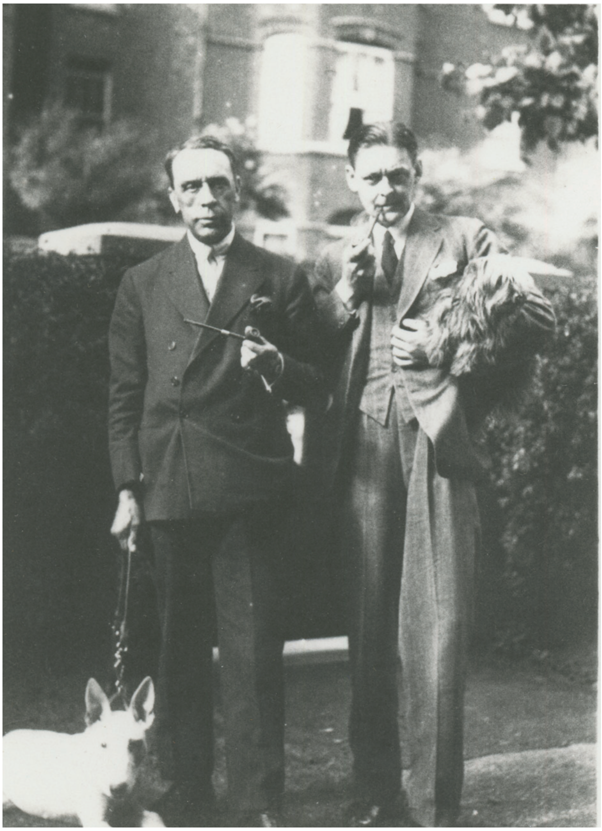
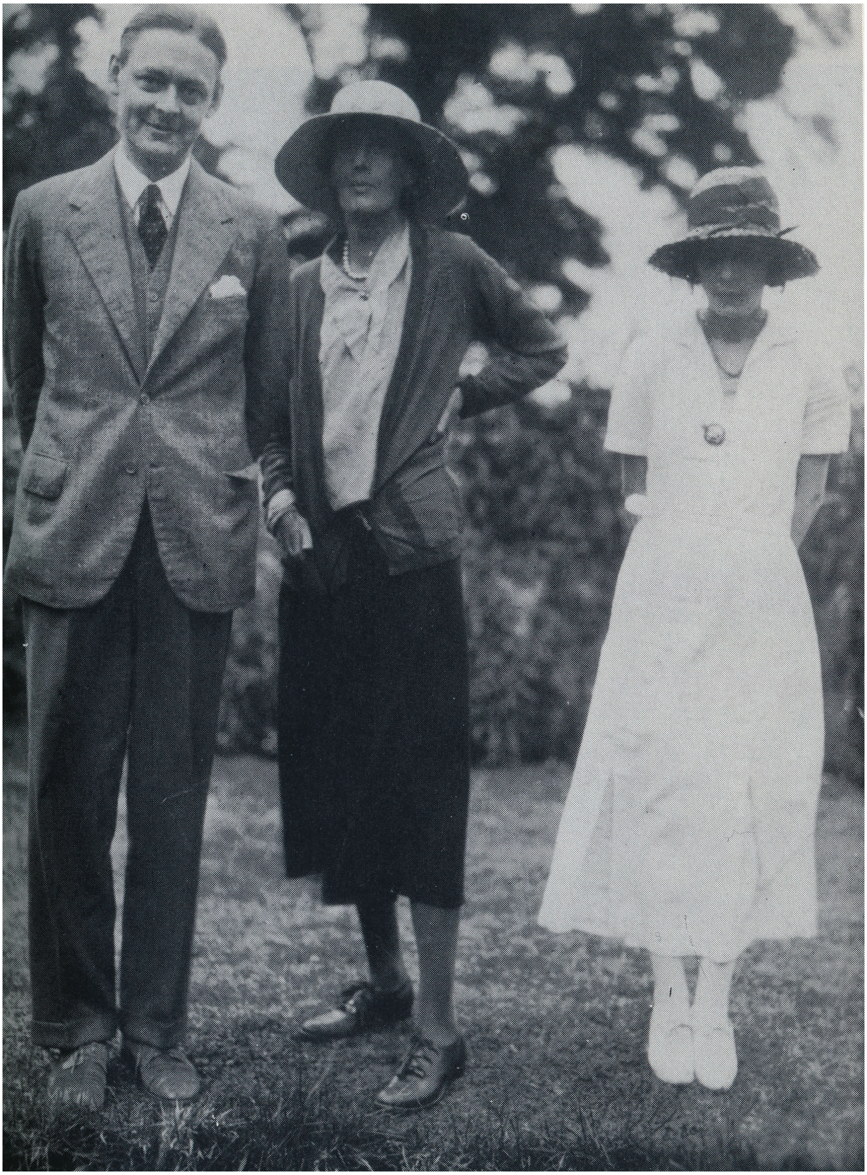


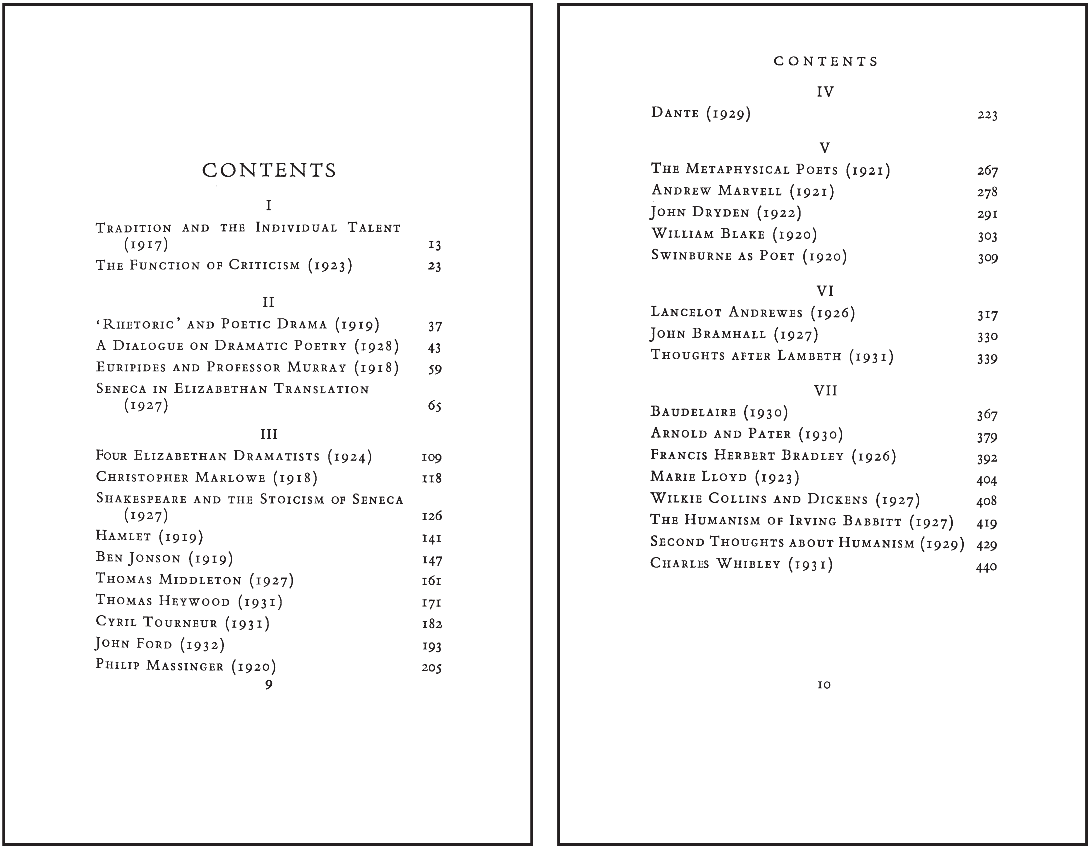
5. Eliot with Vivien at the home of her mother, Rose Haigh-Wood, 3 Compayne Gardens, London, June 1932. © Estate of T. S. Eliot; courtesy of the Mariam Coffin Canaday Library, Bryn Mawr College.



6. Ralph Hodgson and Eliot with their dogs, Picky and Polly, 3 Compayne Gardens, June 1932. © Estate of T. S. Eliot; courtesy of the Mariam Coffin Canaday Library, Bryn Mawr College.



7. Eliot with Virginia Woolf and Vivien at Monks House, 2 September 1932, photographed by Leonard Woolf before Eliot's departure for America. Virginia Woolf Monks House Photograph Album, MH-3: MS Thr 560 (87), Houghton Library, Harvard University. Virginia wrote of the photo in her Diary *(4: 123): "behold Tom & Vivienne . . . she wild as Ophelia—alas no Hamlet would love her, with her powdered spots—in white Satin, L[eonard] said; Tom, poor man, all battened down, as usual, prim, grey, making his kind jokes with her."*



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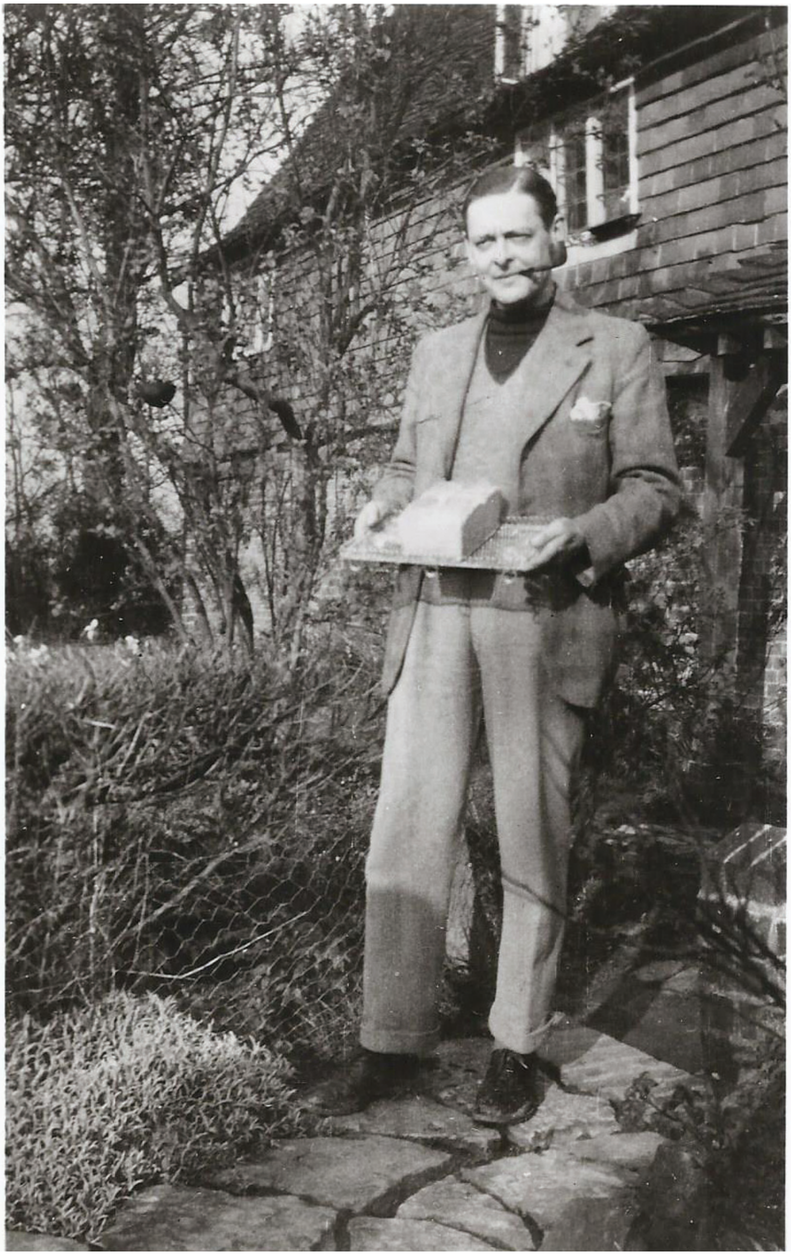
9. Eliot and W. B. Yeats at Harvard, December 1932. Photographer unknown. © Estate of T. S. Eliot.

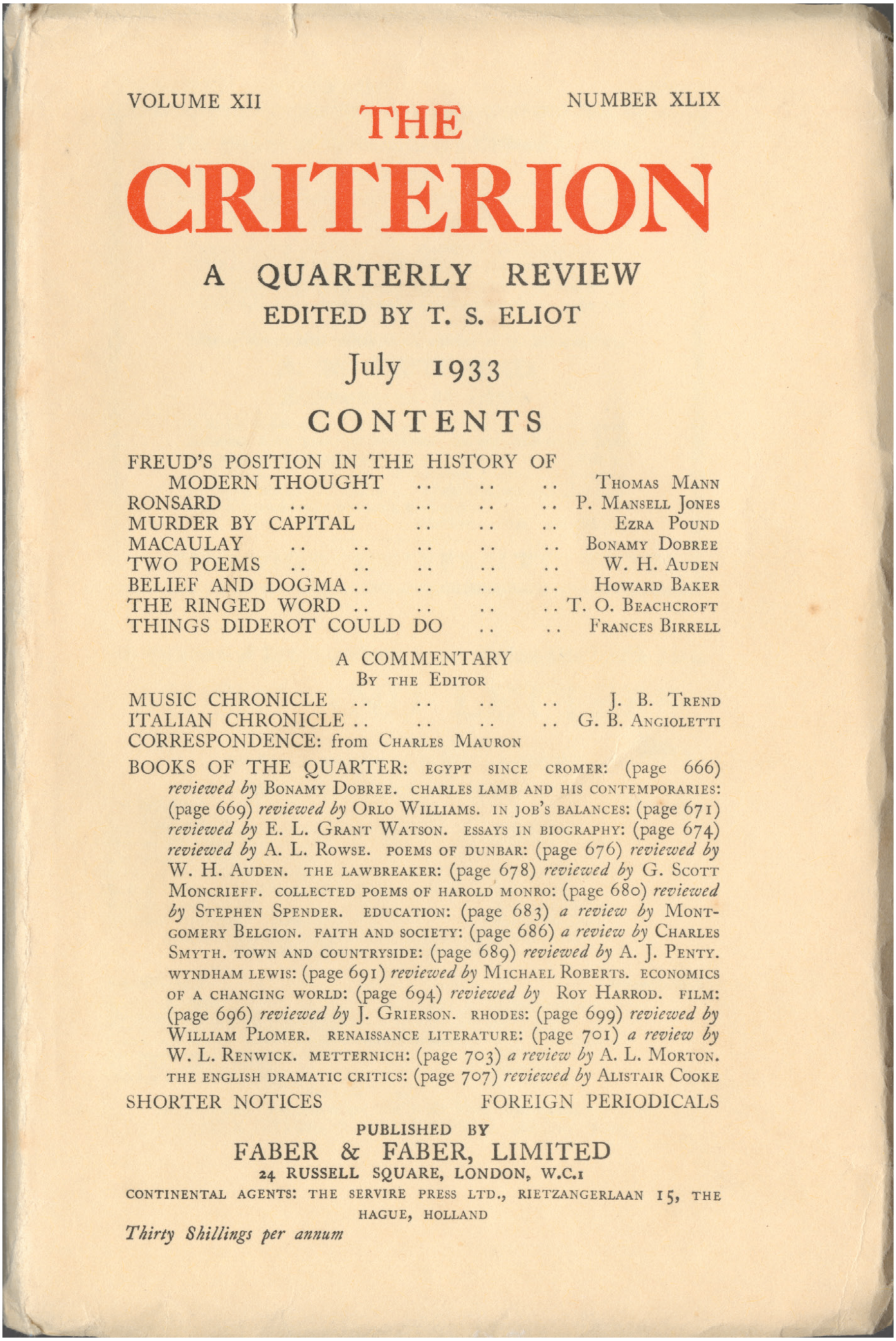
10. Eliot at Washington University, St. Louis, 16 January 1933, for his lecture on Shakespeare. Photographer unknown; printed in the St. Louis Post-Dispatch *on 17 January.*

11. Eliot at the New School of Social Research, New York, for his lecture on Edward Lear, 20 April 1933. Photograph by Corbis / Bettmann; printed in the New York Herald Tribune *on 21 April.*

12. Eliot in Randolph, New Hampshire, for a family gathering at Mountain View House, 10–16 June 1933. Photograph by Henry Ware Eliot, Jr. Theodore Eliot Smith Papers, MS Am 1691.15 (59), Houghton Library, Harvard University.



13. Eliot at lodgings in Frank Morley's Pike's Farm, Lingfield, Surrey, after returning to England, summer 1933. Photograph by Frank Morley. © Estate of T. S. Eliot.



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THE CRITERION

A QUARTERLY REVIEW

EDITED BY T. S. ELIOT

July 1933

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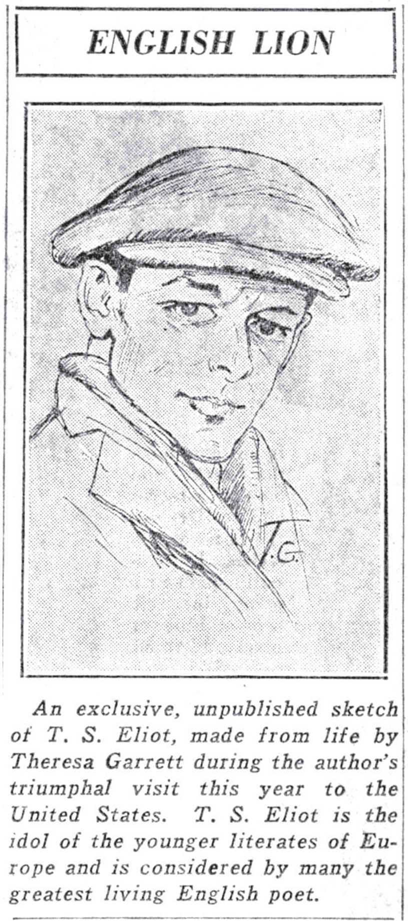

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An exclusive, unpublished sketch of T. S. Eliot, made from life by Theresa Garrett during the author's triumphal visit this year to the United States. T. S. Eliot is the idol of the younger literates of Europe and is considered by many the greatest living English poet.

15. English Lion. Printed in the Chicago Daily Tribune, *2 December 1933. Theresa Garrett Eliot's sketch from a snapshot at the family gathering in Randolph, New Hampshire, June 1933.*

16. Herbert Read in London. Photograph by Howard Coster, 1934. © National Portrait Gallery, London.